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FURTHER NOTES

ON

THE RUNGPORE RECORDS.

VOL. II.

BY

E. G. GLAZIER, Esq., C.S.,
Officiating Magistrate and Collector, Rungpore.

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ERRATA AND CORRIGENDA OF VOL. I.

Under head *Contents*, Appendix A, for "Extract" read "Extracts."

Page 1, line 9, for "3,788" read "3,411·54."
" 28, for "Rungu" read "Rungyu."

" 3 " 14 from bottom, for "2,150,179" read "2,149,972."
" 13, for "1,291,791" read "1,291,465."
for "857,179" read "857,298."
" 11, for "567" read "630."

" 4 " 18 from bottom, after "land" add a comma.

" 5 " 20, for "2,150,179" read "2,149,972."

" 6 " 1, after "Panga" leave out the comma and put a hyphen.
" 2, after Mohammedans leave out the hyphen.
" 9 from bottom, after "wives" leave out the comma.
after "own" add a comma

" 14 " 5 and elsewhere, for "Rennel" read "Rennell"
" 18, for "from" read "form."

" 16 " 6 from bottom, for "1171" read "1168."
" 4 from bottom and elsewhere, for "Gross" read "Grose."

" 17 " 11, for "was" read "were."

" 19 " 5 from bottom, for "one" read "the."

" 36 " 2 from bottom, for "God" read "good."

" 37 " 1, after "again" insert "a."

" 49 " 16, for "bidded" read "bided."

" 55 " 2, for "Extract" read "Extracts."

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THE following papers complete my review of the records of this district from 1777 to 1832. The latter year has been chosen as a fit period at which to bring these notes to an end, because at that time there occurred a change in the administrative machinery of the district. Hitherto there had been two officers in charge of the district; one as Judge and Magistrate, and a second as Collector. From 1832 the offices of Judge and Magistrate were separated, and a third officer was appointed Magistrate. Moreover, the records had lost then much of the interest which attaches to those of the earlier years, and matters had settled down into the monotonous official routine characteristic of the present time, always excepting a famine year. In the years from 1790 onwards, we have the history of the rise of the police force and its hard fight with rampant crime, the introduction and successive improvements in the excise system, and the commencement of an extensive indigo industry. Amongst the extracts from the records will be found some valuable reports on the condition of the people by successive Magistrates. Those of Mr. Sisson, Magistrate in 1814, attracted special attention at the time. They were praised, printed, and ignored: and his report on the condition of the ryots is well worth studying now that the rent question has been reopened, and a cry, half inarticulate, but from many millions of voices, has been raised for a reversion to the fixity of tenure and fixity of rent which lie at the basis of the Regulations of 1793. It should be observed that Mr. Sisson anticipated the fall in the value of silver and proposed arrangements for the periodical resettlement of rents accordingly. I have not been able to make much use of the printed results of Dr. Buchanan's survey of 1809 for two reasons. His exhaustive accounts of the topographical features of the country and of the habits of the people could not satisfactorily be dealt with in the course of a series of papers of the nature of those following; and again, owing to the fact that the book was edited for the English public, much valuable information has been left out which might have afforded some data for comparison, to wit, a whole chapter on agricultural products, a list of Kooh words, &c., &c. Buchanan is now scarce, and well deserves to be re-edited; and if this were done from the original papers, district by district separately, with copious annotations, comparing the results with those derived from information of the present day, a most valuable series of volumes would be obtained.

RUNGPORE,
December 1875.

E. G. GLAZIER.

FURTHER NOTES

ON

THE RUNGPORE RECORDS.

I.—The Police and Crime.

THE formation of the police force took its rise from the abolition of the *sayer*, that is, from the time when market-dues and other miscellaneous revenue assets were excluded from the zemindar's collections. The landholders had hitherto kept at the different market-places throughout the country agents to collect these taxes, who at the same time protected the public frequenting the markets; but when it was no longer legal to make the collections the zemindars' servants left their posts, and there was an urgent call for protection on the part of the traders. In 1790 the Magistrate, in anticipation of the orders of Government, made some arrangements at the principal marts for the retention of a market police, and the merchants readily agreed to assess on themselves a tax for the purpose of paying for it. This system was then extended throughout the district but proved ineffectual, because the greater number of the smaller market-places were mere open spaces under shady trees where the villagers met twice a week for barter and gossip, and there were no settled traders or shopkeepers on whom a tax could be levied. It became evident, too, that a more systematic plan of police was required, which would not only protect markets, but extend its shield over the whole country. Up to this time the zemindars had been responsible for the internal police of the country, and the Collector kept up a semi-military force of burkundazes to guard the public buildings and act against large bodies of raiders, rioters, and gangs of dacoits. This state of chronic petty warfare, however, was only adapted for unsettled times; and when in 1793 everything was settled according to the latest theories and with the best intentions, one of the splendid but utopian series of regulations of that year—splendid in the grasp of subject, utopian in the expectation of the results to follow from their promulgation—directed the establishment of a regular system of police.

The district was accordingly divided into thana jurisdictions, which have remained very little altered to the present day, and the cost, it was proposed, should be levied from the trading classes. But this was found to be too heavy and unfair a burden (in this district the amount assessed was over Rs. 25,000), and in 1797 this charge was transferred to the general revenues. The new system was not viewed with favour by the Magistrate, Mr. Wordsworth, and six years after its

institution he reported it a failure, on the grounds that the police jurisdictions were too extensive, and that the officers were inefficient; and again, in 1803, he recurs to the subject, and regretfully looks back to the days of the government of Hastings, when the zemindars were responsible for all plundered property. I very much doubt, however, whether this charge of failure against the new police could have been fairly sustained. That they were inefficient was doubtless true. For eight annas a day—the pay of a darogah—good men could not be secured; but, as compared with the entire absence of any police properly so called in the period immediately preceding, even this poorly paid establishment was an improvement. Some slight protection was afforded against violent crime, while under the zemindars' *régime* all crime was hushed up, lest the zemindars should be called on to make up the loss. Annals of ordinary crime of those days do not exist, and it is only such large operations as those of Mr. McDowall against the forest dacoits of Bykuntpore in 1789 that found a place in the district chronicle.

The newly formed police had no ordinary difficulties to battle against. But before referring to them in detail it will be interesting to notice a case in which justice failed, not from the misconduct of the police, but from the weakness of the courts appointed to administer it; and the people formed themselves into a vigilance committee half a century before California became a state of the Union, and, after regular trial before a tribunal of their own, executed summary justice on some notorious dacoits whom the courts had acquitted. In June 1800 Mr. Wordsworth sent an alarming account to Government,—that there were riotous assemblies, amounting to 6,000 people, in the thanas of Pirgunge and Govindgunge. The Government was not only alarmed, but also dissatisfied with the Magistrate's proceedings, and hurried over Mr. Parr from Dinagepore to take charge of the district and report on the matter. Mr. Parr's account, which follows, supplies all the needful details:—"For this some time past the vicinity of the town of Govindgunge, in pergunnah Gorahgaut, has been infested by a gang of dacoits, who have committed the greatest outrages on the inhabitants. In the number of these offenders were included Ramlochun, Kanchea, and Ramkisore, three persons who had been committed for trial on a charge of dacoity, but who were directed to be released on security, as the evidence was not sufficient to convict them of the charge. These people, subsequent to their release, having joined their old companions, reverted to their former malpractices, which so exasperated the inhabitants that the principal ones resolved amongst themselves to take the law into their own hands and to extirpate these offenders, despairing of convicting them by a regular appeal to the usual course of law, from having no positive proof of the actual commission of the atrocities committed by them, although it was universally believed, from the infamy of their characters and habits of life, that they were the perpetrators of them. In order to carry this plan into execution, the heads of the different villages assembled the ryots in the public hâts by beat of drum, made them acquainted with the purpose of their meeting, and executed an agreement amongst themselves to attend whenever an opportunity offered of seizing any

of the persons who were obnoxious to them. In consequence of this agreement they frequently assembled in the months of April, May, and June, and compelling those who were unwilling to accompany them, seized several persons whom they asserted to be dacoits. Of the persons thus apprehended by them no intelligence whatever can be gained of eighteen who are not forthcoming; and as it appears from the depositions of the persons committed that three of these persons have actually been put to death by the mob, it is much to be feared that the others have likewise been murdered, as their relations declare they have had no intelligence of them since they were seized and carried away. The above is the only cause to which the late disturbances can be traced. They have been greatly exaggerated in point of the numbers stated to have been concerned in them, which never exceeded two thousand persons; nor do the insurgents, with the exception of the illegality and criminality of their conduct in making away with the lives of the people they have done, appear to have been guilty of any irregularity whatever, or to have molested any of the peaceable inhabitants. It is rather extraordinary that the heirs and relations of the deceased should not have prosecuted until summoned by me for the purpose of ascertaining the fate of their relations, with which they all appear to have been well acquainted, which affords reason to believe that they were not very well satisfied as to the means by which their relations obtained a livelihood. The above circumstances, added to the attempt made in June last by a party of the insurgents to rescue four dacoits from the thana of Raneegunge in the zillah of Dinagepore, who were committed by me for trial on the fullest evidence previous to my departure from that station, and who would in all probability have shared the fate of those who fell into their hands, convince me of the authenticity of what I have stated respecting the cause of these mobs." (1-9-1800.)

The obstacles to tranquillity and the opportunities of the evil-disposed may be classed under two heads: those external to the district, and those arising from internal causes. The unsettled state of the bordering countries which has been noticed in my previous papers still continued to exist. Fakirs from Morung or Nepal came in large bodies and plundered the country. Wherever they appeared, the villagers gathered all they could lay hands on and fled. These fakirs had among other leaders an adopted son of Majnoo Shaha, who in the old unsettled days of the Company's early government yearly crossed the Ganges and ravaged the land. In 1794 there was a raid of a body of 1,800 of these marauders, who looted the Bykuntpore zemindar. Their last excursion was in 1798, when they committed many excesses in the Dinagepore district. They were pursued by Captain Charron, and after an engagement which lasted from daylight until noon they were completely routed, and a pair of colours were taken. They had after this to confine themselves to Nepal; but when they attempted to carry on their malpractices there they were severely dealt with: many were killed and the rest dispersed. Another thieving gang, called Kichaks or Godemars, came from Bhootan. They were generally looked upon as gipsies, who snared game, told fortunes, and stole as they had opportunity. The looting of the Cooch Behar tribute at Mogulhat in 1793

was traced to them, as they were found to be changing the new Narainy rupees, of which it consisted, in the markets; and amongst other dacoities committed by them, there was one at the Coondy zemindar's house, in which six persons were killed and over half a lakh in cash was stolen. In 1814 a gang of this tribe was deported from the Nuddea Sunderbuns, and on their way through this district they committed a dacoity in Boda thana, but met with resistance, in which two of their number were killed; and the valiant defender of his property, who so contrary to the usual cowardly practices of his countrymen had withstood the robbers, was promptly rewarded by Government. In the antiquarian portion of these notes mention is made of Kichaks having conquered Prithu Rajah, whose city was in the north part of Rungpore district; and Dr. Buchanan professes to have identified the home of these gipsy Kichaks, or Kirats, as he says they are also called, as lying in the hills between Nepal and Bhootan, and states that they had in old times a conquering king, Bhim Sen, who held under his sway part of Purneah. The dacoits killed in the Boda case of 1814 were dressed like Bhooteas. We read also of a Kichak leader of a gang named Assaram who lived at Fakirgunge, in Bhootan. It is possible that this tribe might be identified with some of the races that inhabit the low hills of British Sikkim situated between Nepal and Bhootan.

Among the internal causes favourable to crime in this district at the beginning of this century two may be mentioned: the dispersion of the houses of the inhabitants, and the dense forests that covered large tracts of the country. The first is a peculiar feature of this district, in which it is different from other and neighbouring ones; but it is also found in Cooch Behar, of which state this district originally formed a part. Mr. Sisson, Magistrate, wrote in 1814 that there were no regular villages. Every ryot put his house in a convenient position in the centre of his cultivation, surrounded by the houses of a few of his dependents and relatives, and these small hamlets were scattered all over the face of the country. The same description holds good still, though the population has since increased and the hamlets are more numerous. Sixty years after Mr. Sisson's report the features of the country were described in much the same terms, on the occasion of the visit of Sir George Campbell to the district in 1873:—"The houses are not gathered together into villages as in Behar or Purneah. Every little jotedar has his house on his own ground, with one or two tenants or farm-labourers round him." (*Friend of India.*) What is called a village here is a mouzah or taluk, which is either an estate in itself or is a part of one. The mouzah includes all the land, cultivated or uncultivated, built on or waste, of the village, and the houses are dotted all over the high lands in any position found convenient. Even when a few cluster together, such as those of near relatives, fellow castemen, or a jotedar and his ryots, so as to form a hamlet, they are not so close but that each house is surrounded by its kitchen garden and homestead lands, and many a house is quite alone, surrounded by its bamboo and plantain cultivation. Thus Dimla, which contains the police-station of that name, and which figures in the census papers as a village containing a population of 11,468, is an estate comprising 15 square miles, and with any number of hamlets dotted over its surface. The largest centres are the gunges or more important

market-places, where the tradesmen have permanent dwellings and a small town population of artificers and the like are gathered together. The facility afforded by this dispersion of the people to the commission of murder, dacoity, and theft, is obvious; and this facility must have been much greater at a time when the population was much less dense than it is now. The victims can be surprised in their lonely dwellings at night, and before their neighbours can be called in to help the murderers or the robbers have safely got off; and again, the criminal classes are free from any close surveillance from their neighbours, and can go out on their evil errands without being seen. A dacoity attended with murder, now happily rare, generally takes place in one of these lonely situations where no help is within call.

Extensive forest jungles gave shelter to bands of criminals who long defied the law and spread terror in the minds of the people. Large sums of money were paid as rewards for catching leaders of gangs of dacoits. In 1795 we have a list of 15 sardars for whose arrest rewards of from Rs. 150 up to Rs. 1,000 were offered. The extent of these jungle tracts and uncultivated wilds may be inferred from the fact that in 1790 a large herd of wild elephants came down from the hills to within 24 miles of the station, and in 1798 a small elephant was caught in the head-quarter pergunnah of Munthona. Thana Baroni had on its confines Singheswar Jhar, a forest that spread for miles along the left bank of the Teesta as it then ran, and was infested by large bodies of those miscreants who lived by murder and rapine. It was spoken of in 1795 as the place where all the dacoits lived. Rewards were offered by the Magistrate of Rungpore and the Commissioner of Cooch Behar for the apprehension of the head sardars, chief among whom was one Prem Das. His capture was effected by the darogah of the thana, Kadir Buksh, who in 1801 had a hand-to-hand encounter with the outlaws and lost his tulwar in the scrimmage. During this and the following year twenty men of the gang were caught, and the Magistrate reported early in 1803 that the jungle was cleared and not a single dacoit remained in it. The result was owing entirely to the activity and exertions of the darogah Kadir Buksh, and it is pleasant to find this instance of good service prominently brought to notice among the too many cases of misconduct on the part of the police officers, of which the records are full.

But the main struggle against the disorderly classes had to be fought at the north of the district, in pergunnah Bykuntpore. The Bykuntpore forest, which McDowall twenty years before had made energetic efforts to clear, had during the minority of the zemindar, and owing to the neglect of the farmer of the estate, become encroached on by the Nepalese, who cut timber in it and so far acquired possession as to lead them to assert a claim to it as their own. The jungle had also gained on the cultivated land, for Mr. Hartwell, during his personal inquiry in 1810, found much land which had formerly been cultivated then deserted. On one side was Bhootan, on the other Nepal, and right in the centre was Fallacotta, a large village belonging to the Bhooteas, and the forest everywhere afforded shelter to dacoits, who had only, after committing any violence on the Company's ryots, to take shelter in one of these near-lying friendly refuges and be at once secure from pursuit.

During 1807 and 1808 there was a serious outburst of dacoity all over the district. In each year there were over 150 cases reported, and in the two years together close upon 600 men were committed for trial. The outburst was general, and dacoity was not more rife in the parts of Bykuntpore than elsewhere: rather in Durwani, on the borders of Dinagepore, and in Forunbari, adjoining Cooch Behar, was the crime most prevalent. But the large arrests of these two years quelled the rising spirit of disorder, and everywhere except in Bykuntpore there was a lull. Here, on the contrary, crime increased, until in 1810 Sanyasikata thana alone yielded 22 cases, and Fakirgunge thana, also in Bykuntpore on the Bhootan side, 7 cases out of a total of 43 for the whole district. The chief leaders were two brothers, Sonkar and Mohuntram, who had places of refuge both in Nepal and in Bhootan, and passed from one place to another as prudence dictated. The elder brother, Sonkar, was caught in 1808 and put on trial, and a year later, when the police, in a hot chase after Mohuntram, crossed into Nepalese territory and seized some plundered property in the house of a Boiragi, they brought away some letters written by Sonkar from jail to his brother asking for money to be sent to him, and pointing out the mode of evidence the witnesses were to give whom he had called up in defence. It is curious to note how markedly this line of action accords with that in vogue at the present day; but fortunately in this instance the tactics did not succeed, as they too often do under the skilful manipulation of a clever advocate, and Sonkar was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and 39 stripes, and was banished to Bhagulpore. This raid of the police into Nepal almost brought on a war; for the dacoits' friends, who were in authority there, bristled up and assembled in force at their fort across the border, their object being to lay hold of the darogah and keep him as a hostage until the dacoits who had been taken prisoners were released: but a judicious display of force on our side, and a letter of remonstrance to the Rajah of Nepal, settled matters for a time. The Government approved the action of the local authorities, but told them not to cross the frontier again.

Mohuntram fully upheld the family reputation, and the large number of dacoities in Bykuntpore in 1810 may be ascribed to his exertions in a great measure. He left the Nepal side and made his head-quarters in Bhootan. In one case, when he was recognized, he was accompanied by a gang of 70 men, who were armed with spears and bows and arrows; in another, where his personal agency is not clear, but which well illustrates the character of the raids of that time, 151 head of cattle were driven off and other property was taken; but in this instance the police guard quickly pursued after the plunderers and recovered the booty, the dacoits escaping into the jungles of Bhootan. In a third case the house of Mr. Robinson in Boda thana was attacked, three persons were killed, and Rs. 700 in cash, besides a gold watch and other property, were stolen. The Bykuntpore zemindars' people caught 37 of the dacoits. Mr, Hartwell, the Magistrate in 1810, made a close personal inquiry into the condition of Bykuntpore and the measures necessary for its protection, and he removed the station from Sanyasikata to Benakooree, and had posts of guards located in different exposed parts of the jurisdiction of the two thanas of

Sanyasikata and Fakirgunge. These measures were completely successful, so much so that Mohuntram himself was caught early in 1811. Substantial rewards were given by Government to the jemadar and burkundazes of police who effected the capture, and the country became comparatively quiet. These border raids were completely quashed by the permission given by Government in 1814 to pursue the offenders across the frontier.

Subsequent to the arrest of Mohuntram the history of crime presents no special features different from those of the present day. In 1829 the thana was removed back from Benakooree to Sanyasikata, and Fakirgunge was spoken of as a thana that used in former years to be ravaged by dacoits. Singheshwar Jhar, too, the scene of Prem Sardar's depredations, had been cleared and cultivated, and in 1832 there was an inquiry before the Collector how much of it belonged to Rungpore and how much to Cooch Behar.

The following table gives the accounts of dacoity as far as they can be collected from the records. The results of the action of late years are also added for the sake of comparison.

Table of Dacoities.

Year.	Number of dacoities reported.	Number of cases in column 2 in which murder was committed.	Year.	Number of dacoities reported.	Number of cases in column 2 in which murder was committed.
1803	41	19	1816	40	Not known.
1804	28	8	1817	13	Ditto.
1805	33	10	1819	22	.....
1806	44	9	1820	8	.....
1807	153	Not known.	1821	30	4
1808	151	7	1825	1	.....
1809	51	?	1830	9	.....
1810	43	6	1861	32	1
1811	30	4	1868	11	.....
1812	34	6	1872	8	.....
1813	47	9	1873	30	2
1814	38	6	1874	17	.....
1815	32	Not known.	1875	10	1

The table needs some few remarks for its elucidation.

It is not to be credited that in 1807 dacoities increased, as compared with the preceding years, to the extent shown by the figures. A large number of cases of these years were never reported. The degree to which crime was not reported may be seen from Mr. MacLeod's letter in the appendix, where he remarks on the apparent increase in burglary in five years, from 90 cases in a year to over 1,000 in six months, and even then supposes that not one-half of the actual cases came to light. It is improbable, for instance, that in 1803, when there were nearly three times as many dacoities with murder as there were in 1808, that the total number of dacoities in the former year was not a third of those in the latter. In those early years, before the police became well organized, only special and atrocious crimes came to light. The vast incubus of crime and oppression of which the silent multitude were the victims was not recognized and was not lightened. When the merchants' shops or the Company's factories or the zemindars' houses were touched, then

indeed we hear enough of the state of the district. Thus in 1797 it was reported that there was a general dread arising from dacoities among the people, but on inquiry this resolved itself into a dread on the part of the merchants of Rungpore owing to a dacoity in a factory near the station in which four persons had been killed. In 1802, too, we read of an attack on an indigo planter's house at Mustafapore, in which Mr. Engell, the planter, was wounded; and two years later the house of a zemindar of Bhiturbund was attacked, and ten of the servants were killed and seventeen wounded. Meanwhile the mass of the poor suffered on until more perfect police arrangements revealed to some extent the oppression they must have endured when 150 dacoities and more than 1,000 burglaries could occur in a year. Again, I cannot suppose that the improvement after 1808, great as it undoubtedly was, was so great and complete as the figures would show. Indeed, the returns for some of the later years up to 1830 are very doubtful, and would even imply, as compared with our present figures, that we have gone back instead of forward—a conclusion which, looking at the improvement of the country in every respect, it would be hard to accept. In explanation of the apparent anomaly it may be mentioned that the reporting of crime is much more complete now than then. Dacoities, that is, land ones, leaving out of account those that occur on the big rivers and are never heard of, are always reported, and the Penal Code includes within the definition of dacoity many cases that are not properly gang robberies. But while it cannot be allowed that crime is more prevalent now than it was fifty years ago, I do not suppose we are very much in advance of those days. The police supervision is undoubtedly more efficient, communications are better, and the country has been cleared, but there has been no improvement in the morals of the people. The Mohammedan population could not well be in a more degraded state; and there is an amount of latent crime power in the community which wants only a favourable opportunity to be evoked in full force. Any villager of the poorer classes, whatever his previous reputation, seems ready to commit a burglary or to join in a dacoity without the slightest hesitation; and it is said that the men of Durwani thana often on their way home from a feast cut a hole in any conveniently situated solitary house and loot a few brass pots and cloths as a pastime. Durwani still holds the bad pre-eminence for crime it showed in 1807, and the unwieldy thana of Boda, now in Julpigori, has consistently maintained a still worse reputation.

It is time to recur to the means by which was secured the progress of the district from disorder to order, from lawlessness to peace. The complaints urged against the new system in 1799 were that the men employed were inefficient, and that their jurisdictions were too large: both charges were in a measure true. Of the inefficiency of the officers much has already been said. Though with rice ranging from 5 to 8 annas a maund, and sometimes even cheaper, the pay of Rs. 15 a month represented far more than it does in these days, yet it could not be considered adequate for men invested with the powers the old darogahs had. Dismissals for bribery, illegal methods of action, such as keeping suspected men in confinement for weeks at a time, and the like, were very frequent. Benakooree, when its old importance

as an outpost of civilization was lost owing to the quietness of the times after 1810, became a penal settlement, to which darogahs from other thanas were sent for punishment of misconduct. Some few of the thanas drew a pay of Rs. 25, and of late years this seems to have been the general salary; but still it cannot be said that the men on the old inadequate salary did at all badly in their day. They did their work well in rooting out the dacoits, and they no doubt in one way or another got sufficient to remunerate them for their exertions. One complaint is made on their behalf by a Magistrate, to the effect that the lower officers were badly treated in the way of promotion, and that idle, half-starved expectants, or, as they called themselves, umedwars, were pushed into the post of darogahs instead of deserving officers of lower grade being promoted.

The thana jurisdictions had also been badly arranged. Mr. Sisson's animadversions on this matter will be found in his letters in the appendix. The fault originated in the arrangement of the thanas according to estates. Thus, of three estates belonging to the Rajah of Cooch Behar, Chakla Boda was made into one thana, and Chaklas Patgram and Purubbhag, united, formed another. But this left Purubbhag 60 miles from its thana head-quarters, to reach which its residents had to traverse the jurisdiction of two intermediate thanas. This error was soon rectified, and Purubbhag was transferred to Borabari thana; but Patgram was thus left a small thana of 82 square miles, while Boda was a huge one of 362, according to Mr. Sisson's measurement, or, in the figures of the present day, 104 square miles and 475 square miles respectively. These two thanas, now in Julpigori district, remain unaltered; but in 1868 some of the inequalities of the thanas remaining in the district were redressed. The changes since the first formation of the thanas will be best shown in the following table:—

Thana Jurisdictions as formed in 1793.

	Name of Thana.	Remarks.
1.	Kotwali, otherwise called Mahigunge or Rungpore.	
2.	Martazagunge or Dhap (Sudder Station)	Moved to Nisbetgunge by Mr. Nisbet, Magistrate in 1827.
3.	Kumargunge.	
4.	Durwani.	
5.	Dimla.	
6.	Baroni	The change in the course of the Teesta in the early years of this century moved Baroni from the left bank to the right, and it was abolished on the redistribution in 1868 from its nearness to Dimla. The jurisdiction on the left bank of the Teesta was incorporated with Forunbari, and a new thana was formed in its place at Jaldhaka, south of Dimla.
7.	Sanyasikata in Bykuntpore...	Removed to Benakooree in 1810, and back again to Sanyasikata in 1829. Now in Julpigori.

Thana Jurisdictions as formed in 1793.—(Continued.)

	Name of Thana	Remarks.
8.	Fakirgunge in Bykuntpore ..	Now in Julpigori.
9.	Forunbari	Site of thana removed to Kaligunge last year.
10.	Borobari	Station a few years since removed to Kulaghat on the Dhurla.
11.	Nagaseri.	
12.	Olipore.	
13.	Chilmari	Lately reduced to an outpost under Olipore, and in its place a thana has been formed at Sundargunge.
14.	Sadullapore.	
15.	Bhowanigunge in Patiladaha.	
16.	Dewangunge in Patiladaha ..	Transferred to Bogra in 1833; now in Mymensingh.
17.	Govindgunge	Transferred to Bogra in 1833; received back in 1872.
18.	Bagdwar	Abolished on the redistribution of jurisdictions in 1868 from its proximity to Pirgunge.
19.	Khotlal	Transferred to Dinagepore in 1799; now in Bogra.
20.	Rannygunge or Hubrah ...	Transferred to Dinagepore in 1799.

Thanas transferred from Dinagepore in 1799.

21.	Krishnagar at Sahibgunge in Batashun	Moved to Molong in 1802. Later, Molong was reduced to be an outpost under Mahigunge, but in the redistribution in 1868 was again made a thana in place of Bagdwar, which was abolished. Site was removed to Meetapookur last year.
22.	Pirgunge.	

Thanas received on abolition of the Cooch Behar Commission in 1801.

23.	Boda	Now in Julpigori.
24.	Patgram	Ditto.
25.	Doobree	Now in Gowalpara.
26.	Rangamati	Ditto.
27.	Currybarry	Ditto.

There are 16 thanas now in the district, 10 under three sub-divisions and 6 under head-quarters.

The thana jurisdictions proved to be too large, because the police officers had no help from any village establishment. In this district there were no villages properly so called, no village system, and no village chowkidars. Up to the present day there are no chowkidars in the adjoining state of Cooch Behar, which is in many characteristic features very much like this district. Section XIII, Regulation XXII of 1793, in which reference is made to nigabans, chowkidars, and other descriptions of village watchmen, was formed with reference to the state of things in other and western districts, and was a dead-letter here. The zemindars' paiks were wholly employed in collecting rent, and gave no aid to the darogahs. Successive Magistrates did all they could to force the landholders to give efficient assistance, but failed in their endeavours; then various expedients were suggested and tried.

Mr. Wordsworth more than once proposed that the Europeans scattered throughout the country as indigo planters should have the powers of Deputy Magistrates to take up cases in their neighbourhood, but nothing came of the proposal

Mr. Rees in 1809 started a system of village watch by rotation, called the golbundi, which five years later was improved and extended by Mr. Sisson. It seems to have been indigenous in the district, and to have originated as a levy *en masse* of the population for their own protection in the troublous times of the last years of the Mohammedan government. The local officials used to betake themselves every year to Moorshedabad at the commencement of the rains, fearing the unhealthy climate of this district, and the people were left subject to the inroads of marauders from across the border, and arranged this system of watch for their own safety. The golbundi, as perfected by Mr. Sisson, is described in his letter given in the appendix. According to it every eight families had to provide a watch of eight men every night, who patrolled half the night each in companies of four men. The system, it must be evident, if carried out, would be most effective, but intolerably oppressive. The weavers, who found a good mouthpiece in the Commercial Resident, were the first to complain. He represented that they could not after a hard day's work take a nightly watch without detriment to the Company's factory, and he got their names struck off the list. It needed constant looking after by the Magistrate to keep this system at work. Mr. Sisson half persuaded himself that the people liked it, and proposed that Government should extend it over Bengal. Mr. MacLeod doubtingly approved it for want of anything better, but it was denounced by a later Magistrate as a system of extortion, rapine, and plunder, and proof was not wanting that the police and the zemindars conjointly had made it a fertile source of oppression and the levy of illegal cesses, as is their wont. The system was at length abolished by order of Government.

Closely allied to the golbundi was another system called the zanzeerabundi, or 'the chain,' which fell with it, but deserved a better fate. Mr. MacLeod's description of it will be found in the appendix. There was no watching involved, but every eight neighbours were to be mutually responsible for each other's appearance when called for. This naturally acted as a check on men of bad character: people felt in some measure responsible for the conduct of those together with whom they were bound, and whom they might be called on to produce at any time; and men of undoubtedly bad livelihood would find it difficult to get admission into any of these small unions, and would thus be marked out publicly as suspected. A system of this kind might be very usefully introduced into a village, estate, or thana in which crime was rife, and would undoubtedly instil a useful awe into the criminal mind.

Government, in their reply to Mr. Sisson, stated they were still considering a new chowkidari regulation, and in 1817 Regulation XX saw the light. From this year and this Act date our chowkidars, who are now universal throughout the district. Complaints of their inefficiency and bad conduct are frequent enough, but they do all the police work of the country nevertheless. The one great want is that there is

no means of securing the chowkidar's pay; but Act VI (B.C.) of 1870 was framed to remedy this, and as it is now being gradually introduced it will in all probability effect all that is desired in this respect.

Suttee.—Of sad interest are the yearly lists of burnings of Hindoo widows, which commence in 1816, when the police officers were ordered to attend them and report whether or not the sacrifice was a voluntary one. These burnings were most numerous in pergunnah Bykuntpore among the Rajbanshis, where the Kooh families who adopted Hindooism, headed by their zemindars, accepted its most cruel doctrines with avidity. In 1794 the Bykuntpore Rajah died, and his eldest son, in informing the Collector that he had received the 'wafer' from his father on his dying-bed, as a sign that he was to inherit the estate, adds that his "mothers, the two Ranees," had burnt themselves on the funeral pile of their husband. We have another instance in 1819 of two widows of this family, aged respectively 18 and 28, sacrificing themselves on one pile. The largest number of burnings reported in one year was in 1818, when 15 were immolated; and the youngest victim suffered in 1822, when a girl widow of 13, of Boda thana, burnt herself on the pile of her husband, a barber. A few years only before the inhuman practice was put down by law we have a clear instance of the cruel murders to which it gave rise, but which it was so difficult to prove. A middle-aged Brahmin widow, who would have inherited a fortune of Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 4,000 left by her husband, was burnt on the pile by her husband's brothers, and no notice was given at the police-station, which lay only four miles off. The miscreants were committed to the court of circuit and found guilty of having done a blameable act, and to be liable to be punished; but the Sudder Court acquitted them on appeal, on the ground that the practice was not prohibited by law. In 1829 Lord Bentinck put suttee into the category of crimes.

II.—Criminal Justice under Mohammedan Law.

Until the year 1790 the Mohammedan criminal law was administered by Mohammedan officers; the European Magistrates made over to them for trial any offenders charged with the more serious offences, and had themselves only a small jurisdiction in petty cases. A Mohammedan officer, called the darogah of the adawlut, reported the cases to the Naib Nazim of Moorshedabad, from whom came the orders in each case. But this procedure came to an end in 1790; and in overhauling the relics of the old system it came to light that among the 300 prisoners in irons who were in the Naib Nazim's jail at Mahigunge, there were between 90 and 100 men who were sentenced, not to any fixed term of imprisonment, but to be confined during the pleasure of the judge. A few of them had been guilty of homicide, but the majority were sentenced for gang robbery, generally on their own confession made in the interior, a confession often repudiated in the presence of the darogah of the adawlut A number of the prisoners, however, were punished for house-breaking or theft only, and having been directed to restore the stolen property were confined indefinitely because they could not do so. In one case a man had been thirteen years in jail

owing to his inability to comply with such an order, and in another, when the prisoner petitioned to be allowed to pay the value of the goods in cash, the complainant himself could not be found.

The abstracts of these cases, as reported by the Magistrate, some of which are noted below, betray some of the peculiar features of Mohammedan criminal jurisprudence. The general punishments were the old Jewish one of forty stripes save one, cutting off the hand, and confinement either during pleasure or until the stolen property was restored. The first punishment, with imprisonment added, seems to have been awarded even in cases of murder. In the matter of cutting off the hand the prosecutor had a certain amount of option according to the usual tenour of barbarous laws. In one case he is given the choice of either getting back his property from the thief or having the man's hand taken off. He prudently, as well as humanely, chose the former alternative, and the prisoner, instead of losing his hand, was sentenced to thirty-nine stripes and to be confined till he had restored the property stolen. In still more serious crimes the burden of a decision was thrown on a complainant instead of being accepted by the court. In 1795 there is a case in which by order of the court of circuit the Magistrate called the father of a murdered person before him to ask whether he wished to pardon the murderer or demanded "blood for blood," and his claim for the full rigour of the law was duly reported. It took many years for Government to wholly shake themselves free from the trammels of a barbarous and brutalizing code of jurisprudence. A selection of the cases reported on by the Magistrate, which here follows, will illustrate the above remarks:—

"*Report of cases of the prisoners confined during pleasure,—the* 1*st January* 1791.

"1.—*Janoo*, inhabitant of talook Goolnar, confined for theft. The prisoner has been confined ever since the 16th Rubb, of the 18th* year of the reign of Shah Allum.

* 1779.

He was first committed to jail in the time of Syed Mahomed Khan, and released after having his hand cut off. He was again apprehended for theft, and denied the crime laid to his charge; but the mofussil amlah inquired into the circumstances of the theft of which he was accused, and sent their proceedings to the adawlut, and the darogah of the adawlut having received them, sent them to the Naib Nazim, and he ordered that Janoo should be kept in confinement. The futwa expressed that the crime of the prisoner subjected him to be whipped, and that the rest depended on the pleasure of the hakim.

"2.—*Dulloo*, inhabitant of Meergunge, Rungpore, and afterwards of Geratter in Bhootan, for living connected with his brother Dhumserah, a robber. The prisoner has been in confinement from the 20th of Shuffer of the 22nd of the king. He confessed that he lived with his brother Dhumserah, but denied ever having accompanied him to commit robbery, though in the confession which he made in the mofussil he owned that he had committed two robberies at his brother's instigation. In the adawlut he denied the crime laid to his charge and accused Hussun, a paik, of having extorted a confession from him by punishments. The paik was summoned to be confronted with him, but

Rajkissori, vakil of the zemindar, asserted that Dulloo, his brother, &c., were such notorious robbers that the ryots were afraid to stay in their houses on account of them. The darogah reported the prisoner's case to the Naib Nazim, who ordered him to be detained in confinement. The futwa expresses that the prisoner's case subjects him to imprisonment during the pleasure of the hakim.

"3.—*Puddum*, inhabitant of talook Dissoliah, in Baharbund, confined for accompanying Narain, the leader of a gang of robbers, and receiving share of the plunder. The prisoner has been in confinement since the 20th Shuffer of the 22nd of the king. He confessed that previous to the famine he, with his father and brother, accompanied Narain to plunder a ryot's house, and that for his share of the plunder he received a turban, which he took for his own use. The darogah reported this case to the Naib Nazim, who ordered the prisoner to be kept in confinement. The futwa expresses that Puddum is subject to be confined during pleasure.

"4.—*Phoolchund*, inhabitant of the Peelkhanah (place where the elephants are kept), in the neighbourhood of Rungpore, confined for theft. This prisoner has been confined since the 22nd of Rubbyulawal of the 24th of Shah Allum. The prisoner was apprehended on the complaint of Nimkee Myriassim for having stolen a bundle of cloth, but positively denied the crime laid to his charge. It appeared, however, from the account of the kotwal of the town that the prisoner was a notorious thief, and that he had formerly been apprehended for having stolen Hindoo images and for having committed sundry other thefts. The darogah sent his report of this case to the Naib Nazim, who ordered that Phoolchund should be confined for a twelvemonth, and then be released after receiving thirty-nine stripes. The futwa directed Phoolchund to be confined during pleasure after the expiration of the period for which the prisoner was ordered to be confined. The fouzdari amlah were going to release him, when the inhabitants of Rungpore protested against it, threatening to leave their houses. The darogah thereupon reported the case to the Naib Nazim, who ordered the prisoner to be kept in confinement.

"5.—*Packie*, a blacksmith, inhabitant of Cheelakally in Kankneah, confined for theft. The prisoner has been confined since the 22nd of Rubbyulawal of the 18th of Shah Allum. The prisoner confessed that, having robbed the house of a vendor of spirituous liquors named Partal, in company with Fakeerah and other people, he received a rupee as his share of the plunder, which he applied to his own use. The darogah having sent his report of the case to the Naib Nazim, he ordered Packie to be kept in confinement, and to be caused to restore the plunder which he had received. The futwa expresses that Packie is liable to receive corporal punishment and to restore the plunder.

"6.—*Sonaram*, inhabitant of the Dewutter in possession of the Bhooteas, apprehended for robbery. The prisoner confined from the 10th Shabun 1202* Hejira. The prisoner declared before the Magistrate that at the desire of Zunkah† he went with several other people to cut off the head of the ringleader of a gang of robbers named Dhunjah, and that having effected his business he returned to

* 1787

† An officer of Bhootan. E. G. G.

Zunkah with a piece of his body as a proof of having carried his orders into execution, and that Zunkah, being pleased with him for this service, gave him some people and desired him to accompany Cally Churn Sardar. That he, Cally Churn, and their associates, armed, committed robberies in Patgong and Bykuntpore, from whence they carried off cattle and the household utensils of the inhabitants, half of which was divided among the gang and the other half given to Zunkah. At last it was reported that Zunkah kept people to commit robberies, and he thereupon turned the prisoners, &c., out of his country. The prisoner repaired to the amlah of Bykuntpore, telling them that he was a robber and desiring them to carry him before the Collector to prevent Zunkah destroying him. On being examined at the criminal court he denied the above story, which he had related to the Magistrate, saying that he was a poor ryot who lived by cultivating his lands; that at the desire of Zunkah Saubiah he had gone to cut off the head of Dhunjah, a sardar of dacoits; that one of the people who had accompanied him had cut off the head of the sardar orderly and carried it to Zunkah Saubiah together with the plunder; and that the Saubiah had accused the prisoner of having taken Rs. 280 out of the plunder of Dhunjah, which was the cause of his repairing to the cutcherry at Bykuntpore. The vakil of Bykuntpore confirmed the last story, and as the crime of which the prisoner was accused was not proved, the darogah made that report to the Naib Nazim, who ordered Sonaram to be confined in jail The futwa directs imprisonment during pleasure.

"7. *Budder Beg*, alias *Buddera*, sardar of a gang of robbers, inhabitant of Moorlypore in Pyrabund, for robbery. The prisoner has been in jail from the 15th Shawal 1203 Hejira. He confessed that having a dangah of 30 people he subsisted by robbery; that he committed six robberies with his gang, who were all armed, and carried off all the movables as plunder. One half he took as his own share, the rest was divided among his men. The darogah having reported this to the Naib Nazim, he ordered Budder Beg to receive 39 stripes, to be confined, &c., according to the futwa. The futwa directs punishment, confinement, &c., according to the pleasure of the hakim, with restoration of the property on claim and proof made by the proprietors.

"8. *Manullah*, inhabitant of Guroormondai, Cargehaut, for robbery. The prisoner has been confined from the 7th Zihedye 1203 Hejira. He confessed that having attacked a man's boat in company with Busoo, &c., five people, they carried off the things which they found on board. That Chund and Busoo, two of the gang, murdered a dandy whom they found sick on the boat, and that they gave the prisoner a dhotee as his share of the plunder. The darogah having reported this to the Naib Nazim, he ordered that Manullah should receive 39 stripes, and that he should be kept in confinement. The futwa directs corporal punishment and confinement, &c., during pleasure.

"9. *Sutram*, inhabitant of Soondernah, Cargehaut, for robbery. This prisoner has been confined from the 28th Rubbyulawal 1204 Hejira. He denied the crime with which he was charged, saying that if anybody would declare on oath that he ever committed any robbery he would consent to be declared guilty. Subanoo Sardar, a robber,

accordingly declared on oath that having committed two robberies in company with Sutram, he gave him money for his share of the plunder. The darogah of the adawlut reported this to the Naib Nazim, who ordered Sutram to receive 39 stripes and to be kept in confinement for two months, and afterwards to be released on giving a mulchalka and security. The futwa directs punishment and confinement for two months. Before the expiration of the prisoner's confinement a letter from the Rajah of Cooch Behar declared that Sutram had committed many robberies at Behar and Patgong, and that on his release the ryots would desert the country from fear of him and his company, some of whom still commit depredations in the mofussil. The darogah having reported all the circumstances to the Naib Nazim, he ordered Sutram to be kept in confinement.

"10. *Sooker Mahomed*, of Thanthraye, and *Bauker* and *Nowhye*, of Sanbaria in Rungpore, for theft. Prisoners have been confined from the 15th Mohurrum in 1205 Hejira. They confessed that they had committed three thefts, and that some of the things stolen were returned to the proprietors, the others having been appropriated to their own use; but they agreed to satisfy the proprietors for the things they had made away with. The proprietors were then asked whether they wished to receive their things again, or to have the thieves punished by privation of their members, to which they replied that they only wished to have their property restored to them. The darogah having reported this to the Naib Nazim, he ordered each of the prisoners to receive 39 stripes, to be kept in confinement, &c., according to the futwa. The futwa directs punishment and confinement.

"11. *Comul Lochun.*—The sentence of the Naib Nazim directed that this prisoner should receive 39 stripes with the corah, and be released after restoring the goods stolen by him to their owner. Rampersaud Sonai was the prosecutor, and the goods stolen are stated to be of the value of Rs. 22-12, which the prisoner wishes to be permitted to pay in cash, but the prosecutor is not to be found, for which reason Comul Lochun remains in confinement.

"12. *Sakeer.*—The sentence originally passed on the prisoner directed that he should either have his hand cut off in the presence of the person whose property he stole, or that he should receive 39 strokes of the corah and remain in confinement. The prosecutor not being found, the prisoner's case was a second time referred to the Naib Nazim, who ordered that he should remain in confinement, without specifying any period for his release."

III.—The Jail.

THE Naib Nazim's jail was situated in the town of Mahigunge, on the western bank of the old Ichamati. It was a low-roofed thatched building, standing in a small yard which was surrounded by a mud wall. It was always crowded and in an unwholesome state. The prisoners, notwithstanding that they were ironed, were put into stocks at night to prevent their escape, for the insecurity of the jail was such that otherwise they would escape by cutting through the wall, by which means at various times several managed to run off. Civil

prisoners who had not given security to the nazir for their appearance were also kept in stocks in the civil jail. The danger of fire was always great, as the prisoners cooked their food in the low-roofed building. The Magistrate reports that had a fire occurred when they were safely ironed and pinned in the stocks many lives must have been lost. One day at 6 o'clock in the evening an alarm of fire was raised by some of the prisoners who had in desperation set their minds on gaining their deliverance. Three-quarters of the prisoners had already been put in the stocks, and the confederates, who had just returned from working on the roads, four miles off, at Dhap, called out "fire," seized bamboos and whatever weapons they could lay their hands on, felled the gate-keeper, and made off. A hand-to-hand fight followed between the guards and the prisoners, in which the former used their swords and the latter their clubs. Thirty-six of the prisoners got out of the gate and made for the river, but in the end all were recaptured, one prisoner, the ring-leader, being killed, and three drowned in the Ichamati, into which they had plunged with their fetters on.

Measures were taken to improve and increase the jail accommodation. Some temporary erections were put up near the court-house to hold prisoners under trial, in order to prevent the daily trudge of twice four miles from Mahigunge and back, and in 1795 a contract was made in Calcutta to build a large brick jail for Rs. 57,000, and this building, a mile and a half to the north of the station on the Julpigori road, is the one we possess at present, the only essential alteration being that many unnecessary partition walls have been knocked down. An *emeute* took place from the new jail in 1816. Sixteen life-prisoners, just before being locked up, broke through one of the gates and dispersed in the jungles, but a chase by the sepoys and villagers brought in all but two. Three of the convicts were killed and six were wounded in the struggle.

The jail system also needed reform in many respects. The prisoners messed themselves, receiving an allowance of from 2 to 3 pice a day for the purpose, and from this a deduction was made to pay for the oil-light at night. Their private property was also liable to be sold on their entrance into jail as a reward to the informers by whose means they had been brought there. These abuses were soon remedied, but the worst of all, as the parent of innumerable others, remained untouched until taken up by Mr. Scott in 1816, and that was the insufficient pay of the darogah and his durwans. While police darogahs were to exhibit all the virtues for eight annas a day, the jail darogah was expected to do the same for half the price, and the durwans were to be models of honesty on a pittance of one anna a day, *i.e.* the jailor got Rs. 7 a month and the durwans Rs. 2. It is not to be wondered at that dacoits could write to their friends for money and inform them of the line of defence the witnesses should be prepared to swear to. In 1796, before the new jail was ready, we find an instance of one of the guards and two prisoners running away together from the jail in broad daylight. Mr. Scott reported that it was of no use fining men with salaries so low, and less use in dismissing them, for if a jailor was dismissed one of the durwans had to be appointed in his place, as no one else would take it. He could only

keep the men in order by flogging them, unless their pay was at least trebled. The latter alternative was adopted.

Ideas of overcrowding were different in those days to what they are now. The Civil Surgeon in 1819 found by actual measurement that the convicts were packed in some of the wards with not more than a foot of space in breadth for each. There were 800 convicts then in the jail, which had not a distinct building accommodating the present hospital and female ward. Mr. Nisbet reported in 1823 that he could accommodate 1,200 persons, 800 of whom should be working prisoners to excavate a tank in the bed of the old Ghaghat, which had by that time become a stagnant marsh in front of the houses of the residents. The accommodation of the jail, including the separate hospital and female wards, is now reckoned at only 315; and with a standing jail population of over 500, 200 have to be confined in thatched buildings outside the walls.

IV.—Excise.

THE year 1790 saw the commencement of the excise system as well as that of the police. The articles chosen for regulation were distilled country spirit, muddat, a product of opium with spices, and ganjah. Country spirit or arrack, now the least important of our excise items, heads the list in regard to its productiveness in these early days of excise administration. There were distillers and spirit-sellers scattered over the district, who plied their trade before any regulations were made, and they protested that they could not carry on the business if a tax was levied on them, and they had to be schooled into acquiescence by heavy fines. These difficulties, however, were soon overcome, and licenses were granted for a large number of the principal market-places throughout the district, and a revenue of Rs. 10,000 per annum was collected. The system pursued was what is known as the outstill system. A daily tax of 6 annas or 12 annas, according to locality, was paid by the distiller, and he was at liberty to prepare and sell as much spirit as he could, and the more he sold the more his profit would be, as his daily payment to Government was fixed, and did not depend on the amount of his sales. This system, while it certainly checks illicit distillation, does so by increasing the licit manufacture to an incalculable extent, and inevitably had a direct tendency to increase the habit of drinking, and, as a consequence, drunkenness and disorder. The Magistrate, Mr. Wordsworth, thus forcibly adverts to these effects in a letter to Government:—

"In reply, I beg leave to state that the proceedings of my criminal court afford almost daily instances of disorderly conduct, and sometimes of the most disastrous consequences, arising from the immoderate use of spirituous liquors among the lower classes of the natives—an evil in a great measure ascribable to the low price at which such liquors can be manufactured and sold in this district. The better to afford the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council an opportunity of considering this circumstance, and of applying a proportionate remedy, so far as any increase of price by taxation or otherwise may be supposed likely to discourage the use of them, I beg leave to furnish

a statement of the highest general price at which arrack or *mud* (the only spirituous liquor manufactured in this district) can at all times be procured under the circumstances of the present tax. A manufacturer who pays but 12 annas per diem to Government for a still capable of holding 20 seers of water, can work off one maund of rice and produce 40 seers or quarts of the strongest arrack in common use, which he can afford to sell at four puns (= one anna) the seer, or Rs. 2-8 the maund, when rice is at 8 annas the maund; but when, as is now commonly the case, rice sells at three maunds the rupee, and sometimes much cheaper, the value of the arrack of course decreases in proportion, and the facility with which the poorest classes can command the use of this destructive liquor may be easily conjectured; and since it appears that half a seer of the arrack alluded to is fully sufficient to completely intoxicate even persons accustomed to the use of it, it is reasonable to conclude that a common labourer who is not altogether addicted to drunkenness, and who earns only from Re. 1-8 to Rs. 2 the month—that is to say, from 96 to 128 puns—can in general procure a greater quantity of this liquor for a month's consumption than can be considered sufficient for any salutary purpose, from twenty to thirty puns." (31-12-1799.)

He recommended that Government should manage the distilleries and sell the liquor. Dr. Buchanan in 1809 found intoxication much more prevalent here than in Dinagepore.

Later on, in 1815, we find the sudder distillery system partially in force. There were two distilleries, at Dhap and Mahigunge respectively, and the spirit-sellers of the head-quarter shops manufactured their spirits there under Government surveillance, the rest of the district being still managed in the former manner. The head-quarter shopkeepers, who made their spirit in the Government distillery at this time, paid a daily tax of Re. 1-8 each, and a duty of two annas per gallon on all the spirit taken out. But this small duty, compared with the large license fee of Rs. 45 a month, could exercise little check on the consumption, for it would still be to the interest of the vendors to increase their sales as much as possible; but it had the advantage of securing a registration of the quantity of spirits manufactured, and thus affords a means of comparing the consumption of country spirit in the town sixty years ago and at the present time. The quantity of spirit taken out every day for the four shops which were at Mahigunge, Nawabgunge, and Dhap, was 26 gallons. The quantity now used by the town shops amounts to an average of 1,576 gallons per year, or between four and five gallons per day. There is little room for illicit distillation in the town, whatever there may be in the country parts; and even allowing for the abuses to which the sudder distillery system is liable, of connivance between the distillers and the Government establishment in taking out a larger quantity of spirit than is paid for and registered, still there can be no doubt that there has been a most material decrease in the consumption of country spirit as compared with what existed in the first days of excise laws. Cases of disorder or drunkenness rarely, if ever, come before the courts, and such few cases as occasionally occur are due to the educated classes, who drink imported spirits.

A recurrence of bad seasons led the shopkeepers at head-quarters, who were taxed at a very high rate of license fee, to throw up their shops, and a distillery was then established in which spirits were manufactured and sold by Government. An estimate of the receipts and expenditure of this enterprise is given, which shows an increase in the retail price of spirits from 6 annas the gallon, taking six bottles to a gallon, in 1799, to 14 annas the gallon in 1816. The retail price is now from 12 annas to Re. 1 a bottle, or Rs. 4-8 to Rs. 6 the gallon.

Estimated expense of a khas distillery and liquor shops at the Sudder Station of Zillah Rungpore.

Account of making 26 gallons of spirits, the number of gallons required for the daily consumption at the Sudder Station, viz. Rungpore and Dhap—

		Rs.	A.	P.
4 maunds 12 seers of rice, at Re. 1 per maund	...	4	5	0
Firewood	...	1	8	0
Bankur, &c.	...	0	4	6
Earthen pots	...	0	6	0
Paper, ink, &c.	...	0	2	0
Per day	...	6	9	6
Per month	...	197	13	0
Repairs and rent for the distillery and shops	...	4	0	0

Establishment.

	Rs.			
1 Mutsuddee	6			
2 Chowkidars	6			
6 Soondies, at Rs. 3 each per month ...	18			
1 Man for counting cowries	3			
2 Banghy-bearers	6			
2 Bheesties	6			
4 Vendors	16			
	—	61	0	0
Per month	...	262	13	0
Per annum	...	3,153	12	0
To rebuilding house and godown for one sudder distillery containing four stills, materials, such as mats, bamboos, string, &c.	...	180	0	0
Estimated produce if the sale of 26 gallons takes place. Price of 26 gallons of liquor at 14 annas per gallon amounts to, per diem, Sicca Rs. 22-12, per month Rs. 682-8, per annum	...	8,190	0	0

ZILLAH RUNGPORE,
22nd *July* 1816.

C. G. BLAGRAVE,
Collector.

There is no means of comparing the amount of liquor consumed all through the interior of the district, while the outstill system continued in force, with the amount consumed at the present day; but there can be no doubt that the same effects must have followed as were

seen at the Sudder Station. The daily tax was a very heavy one for small places, and there was the more need for the distiller to extend his sales over a wide area in order to pay his expenses. Under the present sudder distillery system, which is now extended over the whole district, there is certainly an opening left for illicit manufacture, and a wide door for abuses of all kinds; but these evils are such as can be lessened, if not eradicated, by improved methods of administration, and are nothing in comparison with the evil of encouraging, by a system of licit distillation, an increase in the consumption of spirits ten-fold more than is produced by illicit distillation. One check on illicit distillation in this district is that the people are not addicted to the use of spirits, but consume in a far greater degree opium and ganjah. When at one time it was thought possible to interdict or lessen the consumption of opium, and the Collector was called on by the Board to increase the use of spirits, he replied that though many had died from privation of opium, and others were in a lingering disease from the same cause, he could not induce them to take to spirits. Another obstacle to the retail sale of spirit, although not to its illicit distillation, is the absence of large villages in the district. Bottles of spirits are not so convenient to carry to the open markets as the drugs, and its sale is confined to the gunges or places where there is a regular trade or town population. The number of places at which shops are maintained has remained pretty much the same throughout, as the features of the country continue the same.

The income from country spirits commenced at Rs. 10,000 a year and rose to about Rs. 15,000. (It is difficult to arrive at the correct figures, as the income from spirits and ganjah is mixed up together.) The present receipts average between Rs. 8,000 and Rs. 9,000 a year. The decrease is partly owing to the fact that the district has lost some of its thanas to the north in which a large quantity of spirits was consumed.

Opium, which yields now more than a lakh of rupees, gave in the form of muddat Rs. 2,000 only in 1794. That the revenue in those days was low was not because the people did not use opium, for they have been accustomed to do so largely from time immemorial, and, according to the authority of one Collector, even children early took to it, getting a taste of their parents' supply. But opium was in this district grown for the Company, and it is said that the opium agents obtained only half of the produce which was cultivated on their behalf by the ryots, the other half being retained by the cultivators for their own use or the supply of their neighbours. The opium agency was probably established here because opium was found to be already cultivated in the district; but it is certain that the Government encouragement gave an impetus to the cultivation of contraband opium, and very largely extended the consumption. In 1797 the agency was stopped, and the further cultivation of the poppy was prohibited; but still the demand at the Government shops licensed to supply opium to the public languished, though it was notorious that the people consumed the drug in large quantities. They had hitherto supplied themselves from their own fields, and it took twenty-five years thoroughly to eradicate the cultivation from the district. During this period every few years raid after raid was carried out by

successive Collectors; the poppy cultivation was ploughed up and destroyed; the ryots meanwhile turbulent and complaining; the zemindars, who had their profit in the venture, lukewarm, when not openly opposing, as did the zemindar of Panga in his jungle home, who encouraged the ryots to hide their ploughs, so that the Collector could not make use of them to destroy their plots. Then the demand for Government opium, which had been limited to a few maunds a year, suddenly rose to the rate of 50 maunds per annum, again to fall to half a maund as vigilance relaxed, and the cultivation was once more pressed forward. In the intervals when the contraband opium was not to be had, crowds of consumers gathered around the cutcherry for a supply of the drug by which they had been enslaved. The small stock usually kept became soon exhausted, neighbouring districts were cleared out, and urgent indents were made to Patna and Calcutta for large supplies to be despatched by the quickest routes, but all too slow to satisfy the craving appetite; and it is reported that many were brought to their death-beds for lack of the wonted supply.

The extent of this illegal cultivation is reported to have covered 7,000 or 8,000 beeghas of land, 3,000 of which were in Baharbund pergunnah. On one occasion over 8,000 beeghas under poppy were destroyed either by the Collector's amins or by the ryots themselves in fear of their approach. Various estimates were made of the amount produced. One Collector estimates it as 350 maunds, of which 250 maunds were consumed in the district and 100 maunds exported, and another at 1,000 maunds. The former estimate is calculated on a produce of 7,000 beeghas at 2 seers a beegha, and agrees best with the actual consumption now in the district, which averages 150 maunds only; but if we accept another calculation of produce of 5 to 6 seers a beegha, the quantity of 1,000 maunds is easily made up; and taking an average consumption of 45 tolahs per year for each man, this gives the number of consumers at a little over 70,000, which seems by no means excessive, when we consider how easily procured and how cheap the drug was to the cultivators who made it.

The resumption of the ferries in 1817 checked also in some degree the illicit sale, but much of the good already done in the way of stopping the cultivation was neutralized by the recommencement of the opium agency in the district; but this only continued for a short period, and the final stop to the contraband manufacture was put by Mr. Nisbet, the Collector, who made a most successful raid in 1822. He destroyed 1,000 beeghas of the cultivation and convicted 1,000 persons of the offence of illegally cultivating, and as a result the amount of sale of Government opium at once mounted to close upon 100 maunds a year. He anticipated a revenue from the sale of the drug for Government of Rs. 1,20,000. This is somewhat within the sum now annually obtained, inclusive of the cost of production. Notwithstanding this increased sale of the Government drug, there was a great falling off in the number of consumers, as the vast majority had to shake off a habit which had hitherto cost very little to indulge, but now entailed the purchase of an expensive luxury. Still the habit died hard. The ryots were found to have small patches inside their homestead enclosures in order to provide themselves with the drug. For some

time the excise administration continued to be disturbed by opium cultivation in Cooch Behar, from which place contraband opium was smuggled across the border; but this difficulty was also surmounted. The present annual sale of opium of 125 to 150 maunds represents the total consumption of the district; and taking into account the presumed increase in population, there does not seem to have been any increased use of the drug, or, if a slight one, not to any marked extent.

Ganjah, like opium, has always been largely used in the district, but its revenue produce in the early years amounted to only a few hundred rupees. It yields now a revenue of Rs. 30,000 a year, and the consumption amounts to between 200 and 300 maunds. It is difficult to come to any certain conclusion as to the increase or decrease in its consumption, as the returns are very imperfect and the supervision over its sale was formerly much less strict than it is now. In 1817 there were 28 shops, which paid a daily tax, varying according to locality, from 6 annas to Rs. 2. The drug appears to have increased in consumption steadily up to 1860-61. In this year close upon 800 maunds were sold. A large quantity went to supply Cooch Behar, but there were still 445 maunds left for this district. The income, however, from this large supply was not more than is derived now from less than a third of the quantity. The duty has since been successively raised from Re. 1 to Rs. 2-8 per seer, and license fees have been levied from the vendors, and the consumption of this most deleterious drug has since then gradually declined from year to year.

The number of consumers of country spirit and drugs in this district, taken from the average consumption of the last five years, is as follows:—

Average quantity used during a year in the district.	Average quantity assumed to be used by each consumer during a year.	Number of consumers.
Country spirit, 5,166 gallons.	23 quarts (6 quart bottles to a gallon.)	1,347
Ganjah, 278 maunds.	2¼ seers.	4,940
Opium, 148 „	45 tolahs.	10,524

There may be more spirit consumed, as there is an opening for illicit distillation, but no more opium or ganjah is used than that shown in the returns. The percentage of drinkers on the adult male population of the district, 703,602, is—

Spirits	·19
Ganjah	·70
Opium	1·49
In all ...	2·38 per cent.

Country spirit is used by the bazaar population and the lowest classes of the people, and generally on festive occasions only. It is not a habitual drink. Opium and ganjah are used by both Mohammedans and Hindoos; many agriculturists use it, also palkee-bearers and other

classes who are much exposed to hard labour and the inclemencies of the weather The criminal classes without exception use these drugs constantly, and many of their wives do so too. I have taken no account of the imported spirits, as they were not in vogue in the early period to which my notes refer, and are used now by the educated classes principally, and not by the people generally.

V.—Developing the Resources.

Indigo.—Indigo had been cultivated in the district from time immemorial, and large quantities of the dye were bought by the Bhooteas on their annual visits. Its cultivation by European planters commenced in 1792. The first factory at Kooreegram (Cowriegaon), on the Dhurla, has long since gone into the river. Dr. Todd, the Civil Surgeon, was one of the first in the field, and soon the factory bungalows, with their out-stations, were dotted all over the face of the land, where their ruins are still to be seen. The houses at Kishorgunge factory, established by Mr. Brydie in 1795, where William McDowall, the son of Collector McDowall, was for upwards of twenty years, and at Saptibari, established by Mr. Marsh about the same time, still stand, and the foundations of those at Mustafapore and Meetapookur may be traced. The trade soon developed great importance, and was of unmixed benefit to the people in giving regular and remunerative employment, and bringing a large extent of waste land under cultivation, especially in those parts where the population had been very much thinned by the three-fold calamitous year of 1787-88, with its floods, famine, and hurricane. But the zemindars, who had at first welcomed the planters when they brought their waste lands under cultivation, soon found the intimate relations of the Europeans with their ryots had a tendency to make these ryots independent of them and to put a check on their practices of unlimited exaction and extortion, and soon commenced that chronic feud between zemindars and planters which forms the staple item in the history of indigo cultivation in Bengal. In 1801 we have a complaint brought by some of the zemindars against the planters and the rejoinder of the planters (both given in the appendix). The latter certainly had the best of this encounter; but the papers reveal clearly some of the rocks on which the enterprise split, namely, the tendency to involve the ryots in large advances and a never-to-be-paid debt, combined with a pressure, both moral and physical, used to induce the ryots to take advances and then to work them out by cultivation. As early as 1800 the Magistrate had to write to the planters at Kishorgunge and Tengramari that they must not compel the ryots to take advances, and a quarter of a century later the Collector recorded his opinion that unless planters, like zemindars, were by law empowered to summon defaulting ryots the industry must collapse; and thirty years after that it did collapse here as well as elsewhere in Bengal. The two concerns of Kishorgunge and Borobari, which latter included Saptibari among its out-stations, the last of the once numerous and flourishing factories, passed from European management a few years ago, and are now being managed, or rather mismanaged, under their native owners. The last planter of the district,

who, however, had for many years withdrawn from connection with indigo, a Danish gentleman, died here in 1873.

But the cultivation of indigo, which had preceded the introduction of the European enterprise, has survived its extinction, and the village headman, generally a jotedar of good position, with one or two small vats in which he can make from 10 to 15 maunds of the dye, is now the characteristic representative of the industry in this district. Already in 1823 we find one planter writing to the Collector to ask if he could prevent one of his own ryots putting up a couple of vats within the circle of his own operations; and since the European has retired from the field, these small manufacturers have multiplied many fold. The country is studded with these diminutive factories and their small vats. In a morning ride of 12 miles in the Cazeerhat pergunnah I have counted at least eight or nine of them. The refuse indigo still goes to Bhootan; the better product is bought up by local merchants, and finds its way to Calcutta.

Sugar.—A sugar factory for preparing sugar from goor or molasses was established in 1794 at Burdwan Kootee, in thana Govindgunge, but after running a course of six years it turned out a failure. The ryots took advances, but failed to deliver the goor, and it was found too wearying work to obtain worthless decrees against the defaulters. The cane continues to be largely grown in the south and west of the district, and is a valuable crop; but the only manufacture connected with it is the extraction of the jaggery by the usual native mill.

Tobacco.—It is strange that no enterprise had ever been undertaken for the curing and manufacture of tobacco in this district, which has ever produced a raw material of the first quality. Most of the crop not locally consumed is now exported by the Mughs, who come annually to buy it, and is manufactured into Burmah cigars. In 1790 some Virginian tobacco-seed was sent by Government and distributed amongst the ryots, and a portion of the produce it was proposed to forward to Europe, but there is no record of the results of the experiment. Some experiments with Havannah seed lately made in the jail lead to the inference that a very valuable tobacco industry might be established here.

Potato.—The Government made an attempt in 1797 to introduce this cultivation into the district, in order that the ryots might have something to fall back on in the event of a failure in the rice crop. One hundred maunds were got from Behar and distributed among the landowners and planters, but an excessive fall of rain spoilt the experiment, and only 19 maunds produce were obtained. About forty years ago the tuber was again introduced, and it has now taken a hold. There is a very extensive cultivation, and much of the produce is exported to Bogra. The far-sighted benevolence of the early attempt of Government was fully proved in the late famine, for there was an abundant and early crop of potatoes, which were sold at one rupee a maund, and went far to relieve the distress of the people; they were also largely used in the distribution of charitable doles.

Communications.—The main roads of the district were made by convicts during the period under review. Besides the numerous country tracks there had previously existed but one main road, that of

Rajah Nilamba, from Cooch Behar through Rungpore to Ghoraghat, and this had been kept up by the Mohammedans. It had, however, fallen in the time of Mr. Wordsworth into a state of great disrepair, and was put into good order by him. From Govindgunge the old route led through Mymensingh, by Bygonbari, along the bank of the old Brahmaputra to Dacca. Besides the repairs of this road, the convicts also made the Calcutta road leading through Dinagepore to Godagaree on the Ganges (the portion of it from Dinagepore to the Ganges was made by Mr. Parr, Magistrate of Dinagepore in 1797), and also the one leading through Tengramari to Titaliya on the frontiers of Purneah, which was continued to the cantonments at Kishengunge. The road to Julpigori, which branches off from the one last named at Tengramari, was made later. The indigo planters made very good roads to their factories, which still form useful lines of traffic; and the numerous country roads which intersect the district in all directions were kept in order by the zemindars.

There are a few notes to be made about the rivers. The Teesta, after its grand escapade in 1787, took time to settle itself into its new quarters, and in 1795 it made an irruption into the Juvaneshwari river. Near Gonnati it broke through its right hand bank, rushed over low lands till it joined the small Kheruya, and then passed through the Chowrah, Charralkata, and other small rivers into the channel of the Juvaneshwari, passing Kumargunge, Sahibgunge, and other places, and flooding the country the whole way down to Govindgunge. A set of indigo works at Calpani, in Coondy, which had been built on specially high ground, was deep in water, and much damage was done to the cultivation. The main body of the water, however, did not keep to the new course, and when Buchanan came to the district he found the Juvaneshwari at Sahibgunge drying up. It is now a shallow river with a wide sandy channel. Some time in the first quarter of the present century the Teesta changed its course for the last time. Forsaking a bend of 40 miles round to the westward of Dimla, it joined one of its eastern tributaries and got into its old channel below Ghoramara.

The Ghaghat during this period ran its course of silting up, and its mouth at the Teesta became closed in the dry season. It originally divided at Sankamari, two miles north of the station, into two branches —the eastern one passing through the station; but in 1800 this eastern branch was navigable only in the height of the rains, and in 1823 it was much as it is now,—nothing but a stagnant marsh. Mr. Nisbet in that year proposed to Government that a series of tanks should be dug and the intervening spaces filled up as a sanitary measure. This project has been ever and anon revived, and others with a similar object have been proposed, and the Public Works Department are still cogitating a plan for the draining of the station.

The Brahmaputra during this time nearly consummated that change in its course which deprived the district of Mymensingh of its noble river, and wrought unheard of devastation along its new course to join the Ganges at Jaffergunge. It broke into the Konai, which divided Bhowanigunge from Dewangunge; and in 1809, in Dr. Buchanan's

time, the stream had become divided, and that which ran to the west of Dewangunge was equal to the old stream running east. The former increased in volume year by year, and the whole thana of Dewangunge, or such portion of it as was not washed away, was transferred to the Mymensingh side of the river, and now belongs to that district.

Currency.—The gold mohur was very common in the currency at the commencement of the century. Drafts on the treasury for the use of the Commercial Resident were usually cashed in this coin, and the Collector was directed to give as much silver as he could spare. Salaries were sometimes paid in gold. But in a few years time the gold had disappeared, the old stock was hoarded as the country became richer, and the mohur, which had fetched Rs. 14 at the close of the 18th century, was worth Rs. 16-4 ten years later.

VI.—The Frontiers.

THE following notes are in continuation of those already printed, showing the relations of Rungpore with the states on its borders.

Nepal.—Nepal was a restless and aggressive neighbour, the basis from which raids burst forth, the home of dacoits who preyed on the surrounding districts. With Sikkim there was a chronic state of feud, and all the low country south of the hills had been conquered by Nepal from that little state. The long threatened war with the British nearly broke out in 1809, when the police pursued some dacoits across the border, and was only postponed for a few years by a new war with Sikkim, which caused the troops massed in front of Sanyasikata to be withdrawn, and for a time things were kept quiet. Lieutenant Munro, who was in charge of the detachment there, gives us a glimpse of the hill politics. The Nepal king, Rung Bahadoor, had proposed to the Sikkim Rajah, Shutterjeet, that he had much better pay his tribute to him than to a country so far off as China, and he threatened that otherwise he would be under the necessity of taking the country under his protection. Two engagements took place at the Teesta in which the Nepalese were defeated, and when Lieutenant Munro wrote, a Chinese army of 15,000 men with forty pieces of cannon were within four days' march of the frontier, and the commander of the Chinese forces applied to the Lieutenant to assist him in recovering the Morung for Sikkim. This request the British officer was of course unable to accede to. Rajah Rung Bahadoor of Nepal also intrigued with Assam. He met one of the exiled rulers of that country in Benares and gave him a refuge in Nepal, and made a treaty with him to reseat him on the throne of Assam, for which he was to pay a tribute of three lakhs of rupees a year to Nepal. A mandate was procured from the Emperor of China directing the Bhooteas to allow a passage to the Nepalese army through their country, but the scheme was frustrated by the death of Rung Bahadoor and the subsequent outburst of hostilities between Nepal and the British in 1814. During that war Captain Latter watched the Rungpore frontier, and at its conclusion a large tract was ceded from Nepal, the greater part of which was made over to Sikkim, having been taken from that state.

fifty years before. The Lepchas thus became our neighbours, much quieter and more peaceable ones than either the Nepalese or the Bhooteas.

Bhootan.—With Bhootan our relations were much more friendly than with the Nepalese. Letters often passed between the Deb Rajah and the Governor-General, and caravans yearly came to Mahigunge, for the travelling and housing expenses of which the Government paid the bill, at a cost of Rs. 500 to Rs. 600. This included turbans, liquors, and sweetmeats for the men, stabling for the ponies, and the charge of a large extra police force to accompany the visitors. There were occasionally slight collisions on the frontier of no special moment, and in the early days of the police the dacoits found a refuge in the Bhootan forests, and notably in Fallacotta; but this was remedied by improved organization, and Fallacotta was taken in farm from the Bhooteas, as suggested by Mr. Hartwell in his report of 1810, at the annual rent of Rs. 800, which was paid over by the Government to the Bhooteas.

Cooch Behar.—With the dependent and tributary state of Cooch Behar the relations of Rungpore were naturally very close. During the minority of Rajah Harendra, on whose accession in 1783 there had been such great local commotions, the state was managed by Commissioners, and at intervals the Collectors of Rungpore were in charge of affairs. The internal assessment and collection of the revenue, the payment of the tribute, and the control of the courts, were under the direction of the Commissioner, who corresponded direct with the Government. Thus in 1792, when Mr. Collector Lumsden acted in the office, we find the revenue assessment a little over two lakhs of rupees. It had increased materially since the state first came under our protection. In 1801 the Rajah attained his majority, having been born in 1780, the Commissioner was withdrawn, and the Governor-General ordered, under date the 27th January of that year, that "the district of Cooch Behar be annexed to the zillah of Rungpore." The withdrawal of the presence of the Commissioner, however, soon led to internal dissensions, and the Magistrate had in a few months to despatch his assistant to Cooch Behar to allay a dispute between the Rajah and the Dewan Deo, the second great hereditary officer of state, who had acquired increased importance since the overshadowing office of Nazir Deo had been abolished. The dispute had a disreputable origin and a characteristic ending, for the Rajah laid hold of certain Brahmins of the Dewan Deo's establishment, shaved their heads, blackened their faces, and paraded them through the town in that condition. Anon more serious disturbances broke forth. The Bhooteas were on the watch to regain their old ascendancy in the country, and a daring dacoity was committed by a party from that country on the Rajah's palace, in which eight men were killed and many others wounded. This led Government to reconstitute the Commissionership, and Francis Pierard in 1803 begins the second list of Commissioners, which office became merged in that of Agent to the Governor-General on the north-east frontier when Assam was annexed to the empire.

Meanwhile the civil work of the Judge of Rungpore had greatly increased by the addition of the cases from Cooch Behar, but an obstacle had opposed itself to the disposal of the criminal work. The former Commissioners had disposed of the cases in consultation with a Cooch Behar pundit, and reported their orders for confirmation to the sudder court; but the last Commissioner had cashiered the pundit when he left, and the Magistrate wanted instructions from Government whether he should appoint another one or make over the cases for trial in the ordinary way to the court of circuit. The Government took long to decide on their line of action, and directed the Magistrate meanwhile to keep the prisoners in confinement. Year after year passed and the matter was still under consideration, until in 1805 there were 31 prisoners in jail awaiting trial, the majority of whom had been nearly four years in confinement. It was then decided to make over to the Rajah the conduct of his own courts, and the court of circuit overhauled the pending criminal cases and sent for trial to Cooch Behar those against whom there was good evidence of the commission of the offences charged, and released the rest, nine in number, all of whom had been over three years in prison. Some compensation was also given to them on account of their detention. The Magistrate proposed to give them Rs. 10 each, as he supposed that they had probably saved something out of their jail allowance of Re. 1-6¼ a month, equal to the average pay of a labourer, which they had received to provide themselves out of, and that the amount of Rs. 10 would be sufficient to buy a plough, a pair of cattle, and other articles necessary to enable them to earn an honest livelihood by cultivation, and he was fearful that if they got more they might acquire habits of laziness and dissipation, which in the end would lead to bad consequences for themselves and others. The Government, however, ruled that they were to get 8 annas a month for each month they had been in jail; and as some would obtain by this means the large sum of Rs. 22-8, the Magistrate, in his paternal anxiety for their welfare, only let them have half the sum at first, and they were to get the remainder when they had proved themselves to be of good character to the satisfaction of the darogah or his mohurir, who were occasionally to visit their villages with a view to make inquiry.

There was great rejoicing in the state when the jurisdiction of the Rungpore district officers was withdrawn. To quote from local annals (a memoir of Moonshee Jadunath Ghose, written by command of Rajah Harendra, and lately translated into English by the Rev. Robert Robinson):—"The superiority of Behar as a state now began to assert itself. It stood unrivalled among the kingdoms of Hindoostan for the manner in which criminal law was administered under the instructions of the pundits, and offenders received their due punishment. Under the Rajah's authority, death by hanging was the penalty inflicted on special criminals. The courts, civil and criminal, being conducted according to the commands of the king, the kingdom remained in profound peace." Rungpore annals, however, present a different picture: anarchy and misrule prevailed. No sooner had the administration been given over than a raid was made on Butreegach, a detached village of Rungpore lying surrounded by lands of the state, and

another one on a market-place of Bykuntpore; and it was not till a severe letter of reprimand was written by the Governor-General and a military force was set in motion to recover the captives that had been taken that submission was made by the Rajah. On a similar occasion a few years later the Rajah, at first obdurate, covered his defeat with the naive excuse—once before used by the Bhooteas as a cloak to their aggressions—"The Company and myself are one and the same." The Cooch Behar annals explain this state of things. The Rajah was taken up with pleasure and left the management of affairs to his creatures. To quote again from Jadunath Ghose's history, which for a native history approved of by its subject is a remarkably candid one in some respects:—"The king was constantly going out hunting or taken up with dances and sundry other amusements. Dancing-girls, dancing-boys, buffoons, professional singers, without number, came. Not a day passed without religious ceremonies, theatrical representations, and other entertainments and festivities. There were always music and fire-works going on. People could turn nowhere without noticing that some kind of amusement or festivity was proceeding. Thus the king ruled, enjoying himself in various ways."

Things went from bad to worse. The Rajah was "much married:" two sisters from the Bykuntpore family, brides from Gujerat, Nepal, and elsewhere, with a host of minor wives, filled the palace; and Mr. Sisson reported to Government in 1814 that the habits of dissipation the Rajah had contracted had so increased upon him that it was a notorious fact that for a space of two full years he had never stepped beyond the threshold of his female apartments. Two names among the worst of the parasites crop up in both the Rungpore books and the moonshee's history,—Bholanath, a jemadar of peons, of local birth, being the son of a slave girl, and Guru Prosad, an adventurer from Moorshedabad. Both in their turn held the supreme authority, and worked together or plotted against each other. The latter had been introduced by one of the early Commissioners, and was often disgraced, but wormed himself into favour by pandering to the marrying instincts of the Rajah, when more prudent servants, among whom I must instance the faithful old khas navis, Kashinath Lahari, of a Rungpore family, who had watched over the Rajah's childish years, discountenanced the idea. Dacoities increased on the borders, no attention was paid to representations from the Rungpore authorities, and the Commissioner seems to have exercised little control, until in 1813 the Government had to take special measures. The Government considered that the imbecility of the Rajah and the bad character of his officers rendered it hopeless to expect any great improvement, but a new Commissioner, Mr. MacLeod, was sent with enlarged powers. Guru Prosad was sent to Rungpore and made a State prisoner, and subsequently sent to his home, and the courts of justice were put under the control of the Commissioner for a few years. This seems to have had a wholesome effect, for after the restoration of the Rajah's authority we have no mention of the State in connection with Rungpore annals; and the terms of the local history leave no doubt that the domination of the Commissioner was felt as a great degradation, and when the position of the Rajah was restored there were loud expressions of joy and relief. Rajah Harenda left for Benares in

1836, and died there three years later. In 1816 Mr Scott, who was Magistrate of Rungpore, changed places with Mr. MacLeod, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar. Mr. Scott remained in the post till Assam was annexed, and then became Agent to the Governor-General for the north-east frontier.

Assam.—Of Assamt here is little to be added in addition to the notes previously given. Captain Welsh, who had been sent to reduce chaos to order in 1792, returned to Rungpore in 1794, having settled the Rajah Gournaut in peace upon the throne and left a supply of arms for his use and protection. In the first years of this century renewed disturbances broke out, and a fresh supply of arms was applied for, but this request was not acceded to One after another of the contending parties took refuge in the British territories. On the occasion of the first Burmese war in 1824 troops were massed at Gowalpara and marched into Assam; but the frontierr elations were at that time under Mr. Scott, who was Commissioner of Cooch Behar, and had charge of the Gowalpara thanas as Joint-Magistrate of the north-east part of Rungpore, and no record of the transactions is to be found.

We have in Rungpore what seems to be a trophy of this war—a brass cannon with the name of "Bundoola," the Burmese General, scratched on it in English letters. It bears a Persian inscription giving the date and place of its founding, to wit, at Jahangirnagar, or Dacca, in the year 1021 Hejira, and also a Sanscrit one with the name of the Assam king Gadadhar, and the date 1604 Sak (1683 A.D.). Mr. Damant gave a copy of these inscriptions with their translation in a late number of the *Indian Antiquary.*

The Garrows.—The Garrow Hills border on the Gowalpara thanas, which came back to this district on the abolition of the Cooch Behar Commission in 1801. The zemindars bordering the hills levied duties on the cotton brought by the Garrows to their markets, and kept up out of the proceeds an armed force to overawe the mountaineers and protect the merchants. They also appear to have exercised great oppression on the hill people, the zemindar of Currybarry especially, and his name was held in terror in the mountains. The Garrows retaliated from time to time in a savage style. They made sudden raids on the villages in the plains, burnt the houses, massacred all they could catch—men, women, and children, and carried off their heads wherewith to adorn their huts. The ryots in some instances paid a blackmail called *matakata*, or head-cutting tax, consisting of pigs, goats, fowls, and other articles, in order to be ensured protection from these raids. The zemindars, too, occasionally suffered, for in 1815 the zemindar of Currybarry's house was burnt by the Garrows, and his youngest son was killed and his head carried off with those of others, and the zemindar of Meehpara was attacked on the road in the following year and wounded in the side by a spear.

Matters became complicated by the sale in 1809 of Currybarry for arrears of revenue, when it was purchased by Ramanath Lahari, a zemindar of Rungpore, and the auction purchaser and the old proprietor both used the Garrows in fighting out their disputes with each

other, and each one in turn was tried for complicity in murder and was acquitted. Mr Scott writes of the anticipated acquittal of the old zemindar Mohendro Narayan as follows :—

"Although I have considered it my duty to commit Mohendro Narayan for trial before the court of circuit, yet, with reference to the acquittal of Ramanath Lahari, the purchaser of the estate, under circumstances in which his guilt was still less doubtful than that of Mohendro Narayan, I do not think that there is much probability of the latter person being convicted of the offence with which he is charged." The Government, however, kept the zemindar in custody until he gave substantial security for keeping the peace. Mr. Scott further thus sums up the difficulties found in dealing with these cases against the mountaineers according to the ordinary routine of the courts :—

"For it appears to me that if the offenders at Mechparah were pursued into the hills and apprehended with part of the plundered property in their houses, and made full confession of their guilt before the darogah and the Magistrate, their capital conviction before the court of circuit would still be very uncertain, unless, notwithstanding the usual effects of a long detention in jail, they should persist in repeating their confession before that court. Of the obstacles to obtaining the proof required by the Mohammedan law for capital conviction, I consider it only necessary to mention first the difficulty, after the lapse of several months, of proving the correctness of a contested confession written in a language foreign to the culprit by a person and before witnesses who, if duly qualified under the regulations to attest it, cannot themselves be supposed to have understood one word that the prisoner was saying, and in support of which we can therefore have nothing to offer but the evidence of illiterate interpreters, who, if they tell the truth, will probably say that they have now forgotten the greater part of what passed; and secondly, the impossibility, if the prisoner deny the fact, of even proving satisfactorily that the house in which the plundered property was found actually belonged to him, when none of the neighbours of his own tribe, who alone were acquainted with his habitation, can be expected to have been present at the time it was searched, or can be called to depose, if by any extraordinary accident they should not have fled on such occasion, and none of the witnesses who are procurable can be supposed ever to have seen the house before or since, or to know anything respecting the owner of it." (31-1-1816.)

These excesses of the Garrows attained a great height during the years 1815 and 1816, and on receipt of reports of Mr. Sisson and Mr. Scott the Government decided on carrying out in the hills the system which Mr. Cleveland had successfully adopted in Bhagulpore. These measures seem to have been fairly successful, but no records remain in this district, as they were associated with the office of Commissioner of Cooch Behar and Joint-Magistrate for the north-east of Rungpore. The Garrows continued at intervals to break out along the Mymensingh frontier, and were not finally pacified until a special officer was established right in the centre of their hills. Mr Sisson's report contains many interesting particulars relating to the Garrows and their customs.

VII.—List of District Officers.

THERE follows a list of the officers who were in charge of the district from 1770 till 1832. From 1793 onwards the office of Judge and Magistrate was separated from that of Collector, and the same officer was Judge and Magistrate till 1832, with the exception of a short period between 1823 and 1826. After 1832 a third officer was appointed Magistrate, and this arrangement continued until 1859, when the offices of Magistrate and Collector were again united, which has remained the case till the present day:—

	Collectors.	*Judges and Magistrates.*
1770	John Gross ... Also called Supervisor. Died at Rungpore, April 1771.	
1771	Ditto.	
	Charles Purling.	
1772	Ditto.	
1773	Ditto.	
	Harris.	
1774, 1775, 1776	, ... Records are wanting. It appears that the district was managed from Dinagepore for three years.	
1777	Charles Purling.	
1778	Ditto.	
1779	Ditto.	
	Richard Goodlad.	
	Charles Purling	
	Richard Goodlad.	
	George Bogle.	
1780	Ditto.	
1781	Ditto ... Death reported in April 1781.	
	Richard Goodlad. Collector appointed to be also Civil Judge and Magistrate.	
1782	Ditto.	
1783	Ditto.	
1784	Ditto ... Was Collector of Ghoraghat or South Rungpore, 1786-87.	
	W. K. Amherst.	
	Peter Moore.	
1785	Ditto.	
	W. K. Amherst.	
1786	Ditto.	
	Day Hart McDowall.	
1787	Ditto	
1788	Ditto.	
1789	Ditto ... Retired from the service to Europe.	
1790	Charles Purling. Left the district ill. His death is reported in June 1791.	
	James Graham.	
1791	Ditto.	
	John Lumsden.	
1792	Ditto.	
1793	Ditto	Mathew Leslie.
	James Graham.	
1794	Ditto	Ditto.
1795	Ditto	Ditto.
	Alexander Wright	D. Campbell.
		James Wordsworth.
1796	Ditto	Ditto.
1797	Ditto	Ditto.
1798	Ditto	Ditto.

	Collectors.	*Judges and Magistrates.*
	J. W. Laing.	
1799	Ditto	James Wordsworth.
	Alexander Wright.	
1800	Ditto	Ditto.
		Thomas Parr.
		Archibald Montgomery.
		James Wordsworth.
1801	Ditto	Ditto.
1802	Ditto	Ditto.
1803	Ditto	Ditto.
	Archibald Montgomery.	
1804	Ditto	Ditto.
		H. Somerville.
		James Wordsworth.
1805	Ditto	Ditto.
		J. Battye.
1806	Ditto	Ditto
		M. Campbell.
1807	Ditto	Ditto.
	J. Morgan.	
1808	Ditto	Ditto.
		J. W. Sage.
1809	Ditto	Ditto.
	J. Digby	J. M. Rees.
1810	Ditto	Ditto.
		J. W. Sage.
		G. Hartwell.
1811	Ditto	Ditto.
1812	Ditto	Ditto.
		H. Puller.
1813	Ditto	Ditto.
		John Fendall.
		Thomas Sisson.
1814	Ditto	Ditto.
	A. Smalt	D. Scott.
1815	Ditto	Ditto.
	C. J. Blagrave.	
1816	Ditto	Ditto.
	A. F. Lind	J. Halhed.
		Norman MacLeod.
1817	Ditto	Ditto.
	C. J. Blagrave	Nathaniel Smith.
1818	Ditto.	Ditto.
		Norman MacLeod.
		Nathaniel Smith.
		W. Lowther.
		Nathaniel Smith.
1819	Ditto	W. Lowther.
		Nathaniel Smith.
1820	Ditto Retired from the service to Europe.	Ditto.
	J. Campbell	J. Curtis.
1821	Ditto	Ditto.
	R. P. Nisbet.	
1822	Ditto	Ditto.
1823	Ditto Office of Magistrate joined to that of Collector.	Ditto ... Office of Magistrate separated from that of Judge.
1824	Ditto	Ditto.
	J. Campbell.	
1825	Ditto	Ditto.
	R P. Nisbet.	
1826	Ditto	Ditto.
	Nathaniel Smith. Office of Magistrate separated again from that of Collector.	R. P. Nisbet... Office of Magistrate again joined to that of Judge. Mr. Nisbet had also charge of the office of Collector for a short time.
		Nathaniel Smith. Also Collector.
1827	Ditto	Ditto.
	F. J. Becher	R. P. Nisbet.

	Collectors.		*Judges and Magistrates.*	
	Nathaniel Smith		Nathaniel Smith.	
	F. J. Becher			
	J. S. Clarke.			
1828	Ditto		Ditto.	
	F. J. Becher.			
1829	Ditto		Ditto.	
	C. D. Russell.			
1830	Ditto		Ditto.	
1831	Ditto		Ditto.	
1832	Ditto Remained till 1837 ...		Ditto ...	Was Collector in 1841, when he left the district.

VIII.—Comparative Tables of Prices and Produce.

TABLE I shows the varying prices of paddy and rice during certain years from 1781 to 1874. I have made separate columns for the station and country markets, because in many instances they vary very much more than they do now, owing to the defective state of communications in those days. In some years rice was extraordinarily cheap, paddy selling at from 7 to 10 maunds the rupee; but the general rate up to the close of the century was for paddy 4 to 5 maunds, and rice 2 to 3 maunds the rupee. The Government made large purchases of several lakhs of maunds at these rates in the years 1795 to 1799, and kept the grain stored with a view to mitigate scarcity if it occurred; but the enterprise was abandoned owing to the heavy losses it occasioned from the fluctuation of the markets, from deterioration of the grain, and from accidents. On one occasion nine golahs were burnt at Bhotmari and half a lakh of maunds was destroyed; and the Collector, reviewing all the risks, expressed his astonishment that merchants even found it worth their while to trade in the article. He further argued that the provision made was not sufficient for the purpose contemplated, and calculated that, taking the population at 1,000,000, and allowing half a seer a day for the support of three-fourths of the number for six months, he would require 17 lakhs of maunds. However, our recent experience shows that three lakhs of maunds were found amply sufficient, in addition to local resources, to tide us over a very severe period of distress in 1874. It will be observed from the table that a threatening of drought rapidly raised prices to Re. 1 a maund, and in the famine year of 1787 prices rose to 18 seers a rupee.

In our next period, from, 1814, to 1820, we find a great rise in prices: in fact they have doubled. Not more than 1½ maunds is to be had for a rupee in good years, while in bad ones the prices rise to less than a maund. The quotations are available for the station markets only; probably in the country ones the price was generally 1½ maunds per rupee. In fact, Buchanan quotes for Dinagepore, in his estimate of the cost of living of a labouring man, rice at 12 annas a maund 96 sicca weight, which is equivalent to 1 maund 24 seers per rupee standard weight.

We come then to present times, and the normal rate may be taken to range from 20 to 30 seers a rupee during the year, or again double the former rate. The year of the Orissa famine raised the price of common rice to 8½ seers, and last year prices reached 6 seers a rupee. The present normal price of rice is from three to four times what it was

eighty years ago, and that of other common articles of cultivation in the district bears much the same proportion. Table II gives a comparative statement of some of the common articles for which statistics are available. The prices quoted for 1792 are taken from a general price list of that year.

Table I.

Prices of Paddy and Rice in the undermentioned years.

Year.	Paddy.		Common Rice.		Fine Rice	Remarks.
	Rungpore market.	Country markets.	Rungpore market.	Country markets.	Rungpore market.	
	Mds. Srs.	Mds. Srs	Mds. Srs	Mds. Srs.	Mds. Srs.	
1781	.....	.....	2 0	.....	.....	One lakh of maunds was delivered at Calcutta at this rate for the relief of Madras.
1783	2 0	.....	1 20	1 35	0 29	Threatened scarcity in the western districts; much exportation.
1787 (January) ..	5 5	.....	2 13	4 0	0 29	
1787 (September)	1 20	.....	0 23	0 18	0 19	Famine arising from inundation.
1792	4 0	..	2 0	.....	1 6	
1795	.....	4 36	.....	2 26	.....	The Government purchased and stored two lakhs of maunds paddy and half lakh of maunds rice at prices averaging those given—paddy from five and a half maunds per rupee and under.
1796	.... .	5 30	.....	3 20	.....	
1797	.....		1 0		.....	Quoted in September; threatened drought
1798	.....	{7 to 10} 0	.	.....	.....	Quoted in Collector's letter of 14th January 1799
1799	3 20	4 22	1 31	{2 to 3} 0	1 3	Government purchased one and a half lakhs of maunds paddy at the rate noted for country markets.
1811 (January) ..	2 29	.. ...	1 15	... ..	0 28	
1811 (May) ...	1 28	.....	0 36	.....	0 31	
1812	2 33	.....	1 23	...	0 33	
1814	2 5	.....	0 34	.....	0 27	
1815	1 28	... .	0 33	.....	0 29	A failure of the rice crops for two or three seasons is reported, followed by unusually heavy rains in August 1815.
1816	2 9	... ...	1 7	.....	0 33	
1817	1 31	.....	0 39	.. ..	0 29	
1819	....	.....	0 33	. .... .	0 19	
1866	.....	.....	0 8½	.....	0 7	Year of Orissa famine. There was a magnificent crop, but the exportation was very large
1872	{1 to 1} 20	.....	0 {21 to 30}	.....	0 {14 to 15}	Normal prices in a favorable year; dearest July, cheapest December.
1873	.....	.....	0 13	.....	0 9½	Quoted for December, famine year.
1874	.....	.....	0 {6½ to 8}	0 6	0 6	Quoted for April and May, famine year.
1874 (December) ...	.....		0 25	.. ...	0 7½	

TABLE II.

Prices of various articles in the years 1792 *and* 1872.

ARTICLES.	1792.			1872.			REMARKS.
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	
Rice	0	8	0	1	6	0	Per maund.
Wheat	0	8	0	2 to 3	0	0	
Jute	0	10	0	1	8	0	
Jaggery	1	12	0	2	8	0	
Oil-seeds	1	4	0	3 to 4	0	0	
Tobacco	2	0	0	4 to 5	8 0	0	

Table III is an attempt at a comparison between the results arrived at by Dr. Buchanan in 1809 and those of a statistical inquiry by a Deputy Collector in 1872. Of the excessive character of Dr. Buchanan's estimates I have elsewhere spoken, and the results of the Deputy Collector's inquiries are not wholly to be depended on, from the very vague generalities on which some of them are based, especially in regard to the valuation of products and exports; but the two inquiries show a somewhat remarkable correspondence. One remark should be made in respect of Dr. Buchanan's figures. They apply to a district double the size of present Rungpore, which included Julpigori and Gowalpara; but the statistics of cultivation and production have not to be reduced in a similar ratio. By the exclusion of the particulars relating to the thanas now belonging to other districts, I have been able to correct the totals of the area of cultivation and value of products. Thus the area of cultivation is reduced about one-sixth, and the value of the products about one-seventh. Owing to the imperfect editing of the survey records, I have not been able to make this correction separately for the different articles also; but if any close calculation is wanted, it may be taken that for rice and the common articles a deduction of one-sixth to one-seventh should be made, and none whatever for the more valuable products, which were wholly cultivated in Rungpore proper. The more noticeable features of the comparison are a four-fold increase in the cultivation of jute, a three-fold increase in that of tobacco, and an increase of two and a half times in that of sugarcane, while indigo cultivation has fallen to half the previous amount. The figures for rice cultivation at both periods are very similar, and after making the abovementioned deduction from the earlier statistics there is only a slight margin left indicative of increase. In this article, however, will be the bulk of Dr. Buchanan's excessive estimates, and no safe comparison can therefore be drawn between the two sets of figures. There is no reason to doubt that the cultivation of rice has largely increased, though it may not have kept pace with the increase in the more valuable products. Mustard shows a large decrease since 1809, and the figures are clearly unreliable.

TABLE III.

Comparative Table of Cultivation, Produce, and Export, 1809 *and* 1872-73.

	Buchanan's Survey, 1809.				Statistical Report, 1872-73						
	Lands cultivated.	Produce.		Exportation.	Lands cultivated.	Produce.		Local consumption.	Exportation.		
		Quantity.	Value.	Value.		Quantity.	Value.		Quantity.	Value.	Value.
	Beeghas.	Mds.	Rs.	Rs.	Beeghas.	Mds.	Rs.	Mds.	Mds.		Rs.
Rice	46,79,000	2,81,20,553 (paddy.)	93,11,457	12,84,300	46,14,999	3,10,21,332 (paddy)= 1,93,88,330 (rice.)	2,66,58,952	95,37,937 (rice.)	98,50,398	at Re. 1-6 per md.	1,36,44,290
Wheat	1,16,840	2,68,748	1,08,465	.....	1,05,300	2,45,770	7,37,310	2,45,770	.....	.....	...
Mustard seed ...	7,40,700	12,12,676	10,69,009	1,81,300	2,19,435	4,38,870	21,94,350	2,97,190	1,41,680	at Rs. 5 per md.	7,08,400
Fibres	80,200	2,64,552	1,97,792	12,900	3,52,707	10,58,121	15,87,181	85,023	9,73,098	at Re. 1-8 „	14,59,647
Tobacco	72,880	2,35,412	2,53,280	1,68,400	2,13,612	7,12,040	35,60,200	4,47,038	2,65,002	at Rs. 5 „	13,25,010
Sugarcane	24,545	2,85,250 (molasses.)	4,44,946	1,48,650	61,398	5,73,048 (molasses.)	14,32,620	1,91,317	3,81,731	at Rs. 2-8 „	9,54,331
Indigo	79,240	.....	1,27,260 (value of plant.)	6,44,000 (value of manufactured article.)	39,906	.....	2,99,295 (value of plant).	.....	.....	Valued as before	2,99,295
District total ...	61,21,920 or 43 per cent. of a district of 7,400 square miles reduced by exclusion of excess area to 50,56,320, or 66 per cent. of a district of 3,560 square miles.	.....	2,10,97,192 similarly reduced to 1,80,82,724	36,48,395 information not available for reduction of these figures.	52,13,580 or 73 per cent. of a district of 3,687 square miles.	.....	4,06,02,678	.....	.....	.....	1,97,92,032

REMARKS.—The district totals will not correspond with the figures of the several columns. On the one hand some articles are left out which would not easily admit of comparison between the two inquiries, and on the other some of the cultivated area is entered twice, as in many cases two different crops are grown on it.

IX.—Increase of the Population.

In my former papers I made some guess at the probable population of the district at two previous periods, namely 720,000 in 1789, 1,200,000 in 1809.

The former figures were obtained by a large addition to a local contemporary estimate, and the latter by an equally large deduction from Dr. Buchanan's figures. An estimate by the Collector in 1801, in which he computes the population at one million, fits in well enough between these two dates, without, however, lending very much authority to the conclusions; but the statistical inquiry we have had in the district since my last report was printed affords some slight means of testing Buchanan's conclusions. It may be recapitulated that Dr. Buchanan's plan was to take the cultivated area as the basis of his calculations, and then, assuming that for every five acres there was one plough, and that each plough supported five persons, or, more simply, that every acre of land supported one person of agricultural population, he added to this result about one-third for the non-agricultural population, and thus arrived at the total number of people. In the late statistical inquiry the number of ploughs and the quantity of cultivated land were found with some exactness, and the result gives one plough for every three acres only; but on the other hand, comparing the number of ploughs with the total agricultural population as derived from the census returns, we have one plough for each three persons of agricultural population. The net result is very much the same as Buchanan's, or nearly one person agricultural population for each cultivated acre, namely, 1,672,136 persons for 1,737,900 acres. The non-agricultural population is 477,836, or not much under a third of the agricultural—a result also very similar to Buchanan's. His plan therefore is proved by these later results to have been remarkably correct in the main, a large error in one factor being compensated by an equally large one in another. And the whole question is thus made to depend on the correctness of the basis of the calculation, or the area of cultivated land. That the estimate of Buchanan is greatly over the mark has been, I think, sufficiently shown; and a state of the country in which there could be 150 dacoities year after year, as was the case just before Buchanan came here, is not compatible with a cultivated area of 66 per cent. of the whole district, which Buchanan shows. It is more difficult, however, to show to what extent the estimate of cultivation has been overdrawn. A comparison of figures in the former part leads to the conclusion that the cultivation of the valuable crops has increased from three to four-fold since Buchanan's time. Even accepting his data, and if we assume that during the same period rice has increased but two-fold, the deduction in the figures of population which will result from a reduction of Buchanan's figures of rice cultivation to allow for such an increase will be amply sufficient to put the population at three-fifths of his estimate, or 1,200,000. I am content, then, to leave the above-mentioned estimates of population for 1789 and 1809 as probable approximations to the truth.

In the present infancy of registration of vital statistics no conclusions can be arrived at regarding the natural rate of increase

of population in this district. Some statistics collected by a zemindar of Forunbari thana for a small tract containing a population of 8,000 give the following results for the year ending June 1875:—

	Births.	Deaths.
Male	27·8	30
Female	21 5	29·1
Total ...	24·6	29·5

The deaths were due to—

Fever,	per cent.	46·6
Cholera,	"	20·5
Bowel complaints,	"	17·3
Accidental,	"	2·4
Small-pox,	"	·8
Unspecified,	"	12·4
Total ...		100·0

The return may be accepted as absolutely correct, but the time has been too short and the area is too small to allow any general deductions to be drawn. The year has been a specially unhealthy one, and fever and cholera have been prevalent to an abnormal degree.

The large increase of population here, coupled with the undoubted decrease in the district of Dinagepore, leads to the inference that our increase is largely attributable to immigration. Below is given a list of the thanas, giving the area and the density of population in each, and the following results may be gleaned from the table. Passing over the two head-quarter thanas, where the population is naturally the densest, we find that the most populous part of the district is its north central portion, where the Rajbanshis or Koches predominate, to wit, Dimla and Jaldhaka, on one side of the Teesta, and Borobari and Forunbari, on the opposite side. The population here ranges about 700 to the square mile; in Dimla it is 722. Forunbari, where the density is least in this batch, has much waste land along the borders of Cooch Behar well capable of cultivation. The Hindoos in all of these thanas except Borobari outnumber the Mohammedans. In Forunbari they form 62 per cent., and in Dimla 58 per cent. The next most populous tract is a fertile batch of three thanas at the south end of the district, where the population is about 650 to the square mile. The least populous parts are the line of thanas on the eastern boundary, where the large rivers wage their devastating way and leave in their wake unculturable sandy churs, and all along the western boundary from Pirgunge to Durwani, where the red soil similar to that in Dinagepore is prevalent, and the population is largely Mohammedan. In Pirgunge, where the population is the least dense in the whole district, or 478 to the square mile, the red soil most predominates, extending across its whole breadth, and the proportion of Mohammedan population is 82 per cent. I cannot but think that the natural increase of population among the Mohammedans is less than among the Hindoos. for the moral condition of this class in their social relations is too bad to describe. The nature of the soil, too, has something to do in keeping down the

density of the population. The people are more dependent on accidents of the weather than those on the sandy soil, for this produces a great variety of crops all the year round, while the one crop of the red soil is generally a bumper crop of rice. It was all along this tract, and in the red soil portion of Govindgunge, that the late scarcity was most severely felt.

Area and Density of Population in the Thanas of the District.

NAME OF THANA.	Area in square miles.	Density of population.		REMARKS.
Nisbetgunge	183	801	Head-quarter thanas.	The details of area, and consequently those of density, differ, and in some cases considerably so, from those given in the census report. These now given are the correct ones obtained from the Surveyor-General's Office. The density for the whole district is 630 per square mile, and the total area 3,411¼ square miles.
Mahigunge...	170	724		
Dimla	192	722	North central thanas.	
Jaldhaka	242	695		
Forumbari	264	626		
Borobari	199	718		
Bhowanigunge	93	668	South thanas.	
Govindgunge	278	651		
Sadullapore	188	640		
Nagaseri	317	577	Eastern boundary.	
Olipore	409	594		
Chilmari	138	489		
Durwani	204	584	Western boundary.	
Kumargunge	177	562		
Molong	199	565		
Pirgunge	158	478		

X.—*Zemindars and Ryots.*

THE valuation of the assets of estates for the purposes of the Road Cess Act is now under progress, and I am able to give some of the results for a few of the principal estates in the following table. In the absence of returns from the intermediate holders or jotedars, I have added to the zemindars' collections a sum equivalent to the amount paid by jotedars to exhibit the total rental paid by ryots, as in general when a jotedar pays Rs. 100 he collects Rs. 200 from the actual cultivators :—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NAME OF ESTATE.	Government revenue.	Assumed collections at the time of the permanent settlement obtained by the addition of 20 per cent. to the Government revenue.	Present collections by the zemindars according to road cess returns.	Portion of the amount in the preceding column which is collected from intermediate holders.	Total collection from the ryots obtained by adding to the amount in column 4 a sum equivalent to the intermediate holder's rent entered in column 5.	Quantity of cultivated land as per statistical report.	Average rate of rent per acre.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Acres.	Rs. A.
Baharbund	81,160	97,000	3,12,133	3,08,782	6,20,000	2,73,698	2 4
Kakina	43,480	52,000	1,35,967	32,398	1,68,000	64,895	2 9
Patiladaha	40,555	48,000	3,06,124	1,08,259	4,14,000	1,30,905	3 2
Soroopore	22,521	27,000	62,562	20,136	82,000	24,802	3 4

It will be observed that Kakina, which is the largest estate under a resident landlord, and is a fair sample of an estate of old Rungpore, or Coochwara, shows a three-fold increase in assets over the collections assumed to have been made at the time of the permanent settlement. This proportion is the same as the increase in population during that period, and would indicate that the increased rental has only kept pace with the increased cultivation, without any great addition to the rate of rent. Baharbund and Patiladaha show a much larger increase. The latter was settled in the Rajshahye district, and has been most successfully managed, in the landlord interest, by its rich Calcutta owners. Baharbund has also proved a mine of wealth to its possessors, who obtained their permanent settlement in 1779, as previously recounted It will be noted that almost the whole of this estate is in the hands of jotedars, some of whom have very large holdings. One pays a rent of half a lakh to the zemindar.

The value of landed property has also become much greater, but the selling prices at Government auction sales offer only a rough criterion for judging of this increase, as so many circumstances tend to vary the bidding at a sale of the kind. Just after the time of the permanent settlement we find portions of estates selling for twice their Government revenue. In 1830 a list of estates sold for arrears of revenue gives a result of from 6 to 8 times the Government revenue. A return of sales for the last five years, leaving out a few where, for exceptional reasons, the sale price was low, shows the purchase money ranging from 36 to 109 times the Government demand. Any price above 40 times the Government revenue may, however, be put down as due to special circumstances, such as the emulation of sharers or neighbouring zemindars to secure a convenient estate, or the competition of *nouveaux riches* anxious to invest their savings in this form from the idea that their heirs will have more trouble in scattering their wealth after their death if left in land than if left in money. While thus these excessive prices cannot be held to be a true indication of the actual amount of increase in the productive assets of landed property, they certainly show the extent to which wealth has increased among the landholding and landhungering community.

An inquiry into the amount of increase in the rate of rent paid by the ryots to the zemindars since the permanent settlement is complicated by many considerations. There was no pergunnah rate to begin with; no estate, no village even had a fixed rate, but each holding had its special rent made up from a variety of circumstances peculiar to itself. In pergunnah Soroopore a thorough sifting of the conditions of settlement was made by a Commission which held its inquiry in 1790. Some account of the way in which the rents were calculated, abstracted from that report, has been printed in Appendix C. The variations in rents of neighbouring estates were very great: thus while the assessment made by the Commissioner amounted to 11 annas 10 pies on the large Soroopore beegha, the prevailing rates for neighbouring estates were given at Re. 1-8 to 1-12, and for the contiguous Dinagepore estates Rs. 2 to 3 per beegha. Further, the rents entered in the zemindary accounts did not at all correctly

represent the actual payments by the ryots. On the one hand the zemindar collected a host of illegal cesses in addition to the rent, on the other the ryot held much more land than he paid rent for.

The amount of this addition to the rent in the shape of imposts necessarily varied, and was arbitrary in its character. In Soroopore, the year before the Commission sat, the cesses added 2 annas or one-eighth part to the rental. In one point of view these exactions may be looked on as an irregular increase of rent to balance the increased cultivation of the ryots—a rough and ready adjustment in which both parties coincided rather than have recourse to the troublesome process of a fresh assessment every few years. But arbitrary in their character and uncertain in their incidence as these imposts were, they were necessarily oppressive and apt to grow with use; and not their least objectionable feature was the opening they afforded to the irresponsible agents of the zemindars to make collections on their own account, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. Every domestic occurrence in a zemindar's family, such as a birth or a marriage, the building of a new house or purchase of an elephant, or even the infliction of a fine on him for some offence, and a hundred other occasions, afforded a pretext for fresh exactions. Mr. Sisson, in his valuable report on the condition of the ryots, which is reproduced in the appendix, gives a vivid picture of the systematic character of those exactions; and our records abound with references to the oppression practised on the ryots by the zemindars and their underlings, by the village officers and the police. To this is time after time ascribed the poverty of the inhabitants and the consequent prevalence of violent crime. One period is thus specially marked, when nearly a third of the district—the three estates of Bykuntpore, Baharbund, and Bamandanga—was included in the farm of one person, a treasurer of the Moorshedabad Collectorate, and the huge holding had been farmed and underfarmed to the utter ruin of the cultivators.

These cesses have not ceased to be levied, though in well managed zemindaries they are reduced to a minimum. An inquiry carried out a few years ago showed a goodly array of imposts of this kind; and the latest instance which necessitated the interference of the police to keep the peace occurred, strangely enough, in the zemindary of the noted Jayram Baboo, mentioned by Mr. Sisson, whose successor levied a cess to pay for the building of a new house.

It was, as above stated, the fact of the ryots holding more land than was entered in the zemindary papers that was the stronghold for these cesses. Thus in Mr. Grose's settlement of 1771 we find an entry of a quarter of a lakh as paid by the ryots in order that the measurement of their holdings should be suspended; and Mr. MacLeod, in his report on the district, has some good remarks on this matter, which can be referred to in the appendix (*vide* paragraph 38 *et infra*). In Soroopore three villages were measured as the sample of the rest, and the ryots' cultivation turned out to be double that entered in the papers of a preceding measurement, which an ameen had carried out according to the wishes of the ryots, and the Commission found a result for the whole estate of over 60 per cent. increase. To give an instance from present times. During the late statistical inquiries, in one village

it was found that the acreage was 890 where the zemindar's papers gave only 250 acres This is probably an exceptional case .On the whole there is much more land held now by strict measurement than used to be the case; but still the greater part of the land is held by traditional measurement, and an increase of rent is acceded to by an addition of so many annas in the rupee on the total rent of the holding, and not on a fresh adjustment according to the quantity and quality of land held.

It is thus nearly impossible to arrive at any conclusion regarding the increase in the rate of rent payable by the ryots When the road cess valuations are completed some criterion may be obtained by ascertaining the proportion which the rents of the whole body of ryots bear to the assumed collections of the zemindars at the time of the permanent settlement; and if this proportion is greater than the three-fold increase which is supposed to have taken place in the population, the rate of rent paid by the ryots may be supposed to have increased on an average to the same extent. But this method cannot be accepted as a rule in respect of individual estates, as the increase of population has been unequal in different parts of the district.

Still an attempt may be made to arrive at some idea on the subject. Some papers professing to give pergunnah rates of rent were filed in the Collectorate soon after the permanent settlement, and Mr. Crawfurd has collated them into a table, which is to be found in Appendix C. The results are a vast medley of rates, but I take *awal* or first class paddy land as a sample of the rest Here the rates range from 8 annas to Rs 2-4 a beegha; but putting out of account some of the outlying tracts where the lowest rates are found, the average rate is about Re. 1-12 the beegha. In the late statistical inquiry the rates found for this quality land are entered as Rs. 2 and 2-8; and if we take the average, Rs. 2-4, this will give an increase of one-third on the previous average of Re. 1-12, which may perhaps represent the increase in the rate of rent that has taken place, taking the district as a whole, though the results would vary much for each estate.

If on the one hand the ryots have to pay much more exactly on the land they actually occupy, on the other there are fewer cesses levied than formerly. Act X has not been worked so as to result in any general increase of rent, and there can be no doubt that in this district the ryots have in a much larger degree than the zemindars participated in the profits arising from the increased value of produce and the impetus given to the cultivation of the more valuable products, notably jute.

Mr. Sisson in his report draws a comparison between the mode of assessment adopted at the decennial settlement in Dinagepore and in this district, much to the disadvantage of the latter; and theoretically the system adopted in Rungpore was faulty in the extreme, and resulted in a great loss of revenue to Government, for the district was then at its lowest ebb, not having in any degree recovered from the prostration caused by a series of unfortunate years. But from the people's point of view the Rungpore system has resulted to their advantage, and the rate of assessment is much less than in the neighbouring district. Whether the migration of population from

Dinagepore to Rungpore has arisen in any great degree from this cause, or whether it has resulted from the diversion of the course of the river Teesta, or from a combination of these and other causes, is an interesting question, which can only be satisfactorily dealt with by one knowing the condition of the people and the past history of both districts.

The ryots' position also in respect of security of tenure, though leaving much to be desired, is better than elsewhere. Returns give 25 per cent. only of the ryots as possessing a right of occupancy; but these returns have been presented by the zemindars, and the number is probably much larger. A large number of sales of jotes or ryots' holdings are annually registered, and I have made inquiries of the sellers in a number of cases respecting the time they have held the land, and in almost every instance the answer has been from two to three generations, or for 20 or more years. In a few cases only did the seller say he had held the land for 12 years or a shorter period. The right of occupancy is a legal term dating from 1859, and is not generally recognized. The sales of jotes by private deed or decree of court which constantly take place are made without any reference to, or mention of, the time of occupancy of the previous holder. The Rungpore jótes vary from a rental of from Rs. 2 to Rs. 50,000 or more. The smaller jotedars are ryots proper, the larger ones are middlemen, and all jotes, large or small, are saleable and heritable. This Rungpore custom, in which it deviates from the law regulating rights of occupancy laid down in Act X, has forced itself on the notice of the civil court, despite the tendency of law to prune down all excess of foliage into the same formal shape.

These favourable results have occurred in this district because the zemindars were lightly assessed themselves, and as population and cultivation increased their profits steadily multiplied; and Act X has not been worked to any great extent in any estate with the exception of Baharbund. But I cannot consider the position of the ryots as at all assured if the zemindars now begin to work the machine of enhancement the legislature has provided ready to their hand; and any proceeding of this kind would certainly lead to agrarian disturbances.

While Act X has, in recognition of the security of tenure possessed by the ryots as a matter of course at the time of the settlement regulations, given a right of occupancy to a limited few, with such reservations that a clever zemindar can easily render the enactment a dead letter, on the other hand it has gone out of its way to devise means of enhancement of rent even on the favoured few; while the majority of the ryots, who are classed as tenants-at-will, are in so many words left at the mercy of the landlord. No rule can be well more opposed to the spirit of the settlement regulations than the one that enacts as a ground of enhancement that the value of the produce has increased otherwise than at the expense of the ryots. If it had run that enhancement could be granted when the value of produce had increased at the expense of the landlord, the spirit of the old law would have been exactly preserved, for the increased income which the zemindars were expected to draw from the operation of the permanent settlement was to come from the improvement of their estates and from their bringing waste lands into cultivation. For Rungpore we have a special ruling

of 1786, which was in nowise abrogated by the permanent settlement regulations, and which was, as a matter of fact, promulgated subsequent to the permanent settlement of Baharbund, to which estate it particularly applied, that the zemindars had no right to change the rate of rent without the permission of Government (*vide* pp. 28 and 36 of previous volume).

This is not the place to discuss at large the question of the settlement of the rent dispute between zemindar and ryot, but one consideration may be advanced which I have not seen elsewhere noticed. The right of Government to the 'unearned increment,' as it is termed, about which the dispute rages, might be maintained with great force. It has not been disposed of in the bond of the permanent settlement. All that is there given to the zemindar is what he can obtain by good management and industry in the improvement of his estate; and if, while the zemindar's assessment was left intact, it were enacted that when the value of the produce had increased otherwise than at the expense either of the zemindar or of the ryot the Government were entitled to this increase, which should be regularly assessed and paid by the ryots direct, it would not be difficult to arrange terms with the ryot, provided he were at the same time secured from enhancement on the part of the zemindar.

The condition of the peasantry of this district in regard to indebtedness varies very much in different parts. Statistics there are none, but recent inquiries tend to show that the district may be roughly divided into three zones representing different degrees of indebtedness. In a broad tract all down the eastern side, skirting the Brahmaputra, Dhurla, and Teesta rivers, the condition of the ryots is at the best; the great majority are free from debt. In the central division, from Rungpore down to the extreme south, the ryots occupy a middle position; while all along the north and down the west the majority of the ryots are in debt. It may be estimated that about one quarter of the ryots of the district as a whole are involved in debt. The causes that lead to increase of indebtedness are high rent, few conveniences for export, and the character of the soil. The condition of the ryots on the clayey soil is worse than that of those on the sandy, as the latter can raise a larger variety of valuable crops.

The improvement in the condition of the people within the experience of observers during the last quarter of a century is borne general testimony to. They have better clothing, and eat off brass plates instead of plantain leaves, and the women have gold and silver ornaments instead of tin and zinc ones. A few years ago, it is said, you might go through whole villages without meeting any one who possessed metal utensils or silver ornaments; now they are very common, and during the late season of scarcity they were brought in large numbers for sale in the markets as the last resource of the people before parting with their wives* or their cattle.

There is one luxury of civilization which the people have largely adopted,—the use of the English umbrella. It is said that the

* During the pressure of the famine a man sold his wife for Rs 10. This month (September 1875) a perpetrator of a dacoity has been traced, because he had recently purchased with its proceeds another man's wife for Rs. 58.

first of the Supreme Court Judges, when he landed in Calcutta, expressed a wish that soon the poor natives might be provided with shoes and stockings for their naked feet. Luckily that aspiration has not been realized, and, with the exception of the Baboo class who revel in stockings down at heel and in sad want of darning, the feet of the people are free. But the umbrella has won its way. Mr. Wordsworth early noticed the increase of luxury in the use of umbrellas and palanquins, and proposed to Government to levy a tax on them. Had his proposal been accepted, the tax would have been a most prolific one, but the umbrella referred to by him was the large chutter carried by a servant. This is now used only by a few old-fashioned zemindars, and the heavy bamboo umbrella of the common people is also fast being superseded by the light English sunshade or umbrella, which is in universal use. While the Baboos delight in the bright coloured blue or green sunshades, and a few take to those with glaring yellow or scarlet hues, the simple white cotton or the common brown or black gingham is the most universal. While the inspector of police may have a red frill tacked all round his umbrella in remembrance of the old chutter, and the constable have a white cover over his in imitation of the *saheb*, almost every ryot you meet passing along the road carries some specimen of this useful article, and, whether in fair weather or rain, sunshine or moonlight, always outspread. Hardly a cartman squats on his bamboo cart behind his pair of bullocks but carries his umbrella, often of the brightest colour procurable; but perhaps the climax is reached when cow-boys of tender age, with no clothes to spoil, dance about with their open umbrellas at the time of sunset.

As the common bamboo article costs from 3 to 4 annas, while the cheapest gingham is Re. 1, the great increase in the use of this article of luxury may be accepted as a very good proof of the improved condition of the people.

This popular use of the English umbrella, associated as the umbrella is in the Eastern mind with the idea of sovereignty, is very suggestive of the fact that under the British empire the dream of many an Indian potentate has been realized, and the WHOLE WORLD of India has been brought, to use Eastern parlance, under the shadow of ONE UMBRELLA.

APPENDIX A.

EXTRACTS FROM RUNGPORE RECORDS.—(*Continued.*)

APPENDIX A.

No. 27.

MR. WORDSWORTH'S REPORT ON COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSERVANCY, 1800.

Dated Rungpore, the 16th June 1800.

From—J. WORDSWORTH, ESQ., Magistrate of Rungpore,

To—H. H. G. TUCKER, ESQ., Secy. to the Govt., Judicial Dept.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st ultimo, and for the information of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General, beg leave to submit my answers to the queries therein contained.

2. Exclusive of the great western road leading to Dinagepore, and the several cross roads immediately adjacent to this station (all of which have been constructed by the convicts within the last four years, and are kept in perfect repair by them), there are many old zemindari roads or high causeways in different parts of this district, which, during the old Mogul Government, were always kept in perfect repair by the respective zemindars, but having since our accession to the dewanee been totally neglected, are now gone to decay, and are in general impassable. There are no roads repaired by any person within this district except those above mentioned and a few private ones leading to the factories established by the European gentlemen resident here, and which are always done at their own private expense, and tend greatly to the accommodation of the inhabitants.

3. The roads which I conceive to be most immediately requisite to be made at this station are—

(1) A road of about 25 miles in a north-east direction to Mogulhat by the way of Calamatty and Saptibari, being the high road to Cooch Behar. This road is at present nothing more than a large zemindari causeway out of repair.

(2) A road of about 24 miles in a north-west direction from Cooch Medie to Debidoba, being the residence of a detachment sent yearly from the military station of Kissengunge. From Cooch Medie to Debidoba there is not at present any kind of road, but from this station to Cooch Medie, a distance of 24 miles, a road has already been made partly by the convicts and partly by gentlemen near to whose places of residence it leads.

(3) A road in a southern direction towards Nattore by way of Seebgunge and Sylberris as far as Govindgunge, forty-eight miles. There is already a large zemindari causeway leading in a straight line.

4. The causeway above mentioned, though rendered impassable during the greater part of the year by the many deep breaks and water-courses, may, with much ease and comparatively at a trifling expense, be made as good as ever, and can, with the assistance of an additional number of convicts from other stations, where there may be more than are required for the Public Works, be completed in the ensuing dry season, reckoning from the 1st November to the 1st June 1801. The only expense would be the erection of temporary jails at convenient distances, and of bridges over the deep chasms and water-courses. The great southern road to Nattore might be joined by one from Dinagepore, at Seebgunge, to connect the line of communication between the three zillah stations, and if continued from Sylberris by the way of Beleuchy towards Dacca, would greatly

facilitate the intercourse between that great commercial station and all parts of these northern districts; if continued by Bygonbari, the road could be made with more ease, and prove of more general use by connecting that station with all the surrounding ones. There are several of the other zemindari roads which lead across the country in various directions between the principal towns and trading places most frequented, and which might be rendered passable without any expense to Government by directing the zemindars and other landholders to put them into a state of repair within their respective limits, agreeably to former customs.

5. Of the principal roads here noticed as most requisite I shall, as soon as I can acquire the necessary information, transmit exact maps accompanied with observations on the present situation of the ground on which they are to be made, the number of bridges which it will be necessary to erect, the number of men required in a given time for the purpose of making the roads, and such other calculation as may afford a tolerably accurate estimate of the different expenses likely to be incurred. The trifling delay which may take place in procuring this information will not tend to procrastinate the intended operations, as it is impracticable to commence upon such works before the end of the present rainy season.

6. In order to prevent any encroachment being made on the roads, the native officers of police should be instructed to survey them monthly within the respective limits of their jurisdiction, and to report the state of them to the Magistrate. These officers should also be authorized, whenever any encroachments are made or repairs found necessary, to call upon the mundles of the several villages in the neighbourhood to make good the same instantly; and in case of noncompliance, to report the same to the Magistrate, who should enforce the immediate repairs and levy a fine upon such village for the encroachment made and refusal to obey the requisition of the public officers. No hardship can or ought to be felt by the zemindars and other proprietors of land by requiring them to keep the roads when once finished in a state of repair, although it is not improbable that the long exemption from this duty may occasion some little reluctance at the first outset. It is, however, conceived to be a most essential part of their duty, and can be attended with no sort of expense to them or inconvenience to the ryots who perform the work, as it is a well known fact that, except in the vicinity of large towns and extensive manufactories, the ryots, who depend wholly on the cultivation of the land, are unemployed and perfectly idle about 100 days annually, and it would not require five days' labour from each individual between the age of 15 and 40 to keep the roads in the most perfect condition.

7. From the general low situation of this district and the great number of deep ravines and water-courses which intersect it in all directions, a considerable number of bridges will be necessary to render the communication perfect. Those on the new roads proposed cannot be immediately ascertained, but shall be reported afterwards. Upon the western road leading to Dinagepore there is an absolute necessity for six bridges between Rungpore and Kholahati, the western boundary of this zillah, to render the road safe and passable at all times during the rainy season, and the estimated cost of these six bridges may be stated at Sa. Rs. 3,000. To make this expense good to Government, a trifling toll may be levied on all goods, merchandise, loaded carts and bullocks, which, from the increased commercial intercourse since this road was completed, it is presumed would soon repay the amount expended.

8. The ferries throughout the district are under the management of the zemindars and other landholders, and are invariably farmed out by them to ghât manjees, by neither of whom is any attention whatever paid to the state or number of the boats employed, which are in general so small, crazy, and badly manned as to render the passage of the rivers at all times, but particularly so in the rainy season, exceedingly difficult and dangerous, and numerous accidents occur almost daily in consequence of this neglect. The expense is defrayed by a very moderate toll levied by the ghât manjees on all goods, passengers, and cattle ferried over by them.

9. To ensure a proper establishment of boats, &c., I would recommend that the ferries in every situation be placed under the control of the Magistrate, and

that the zemindars, ghât manjees, and all others concerned, shall be held strictly responsible to him for the due efficiency of the establishment. Boats of given dimensions, well formed, and properly manned, should be stationed at each public ghât and crossing places on the several rivers and nullahs, and the strictest orders published regarding the regular attendance of the ghât people at all hours of the day and night. Every instance of negligence on their part, or on the part of the zemindars in providing the regular establishment, to be punished by the Magistrate, on a summary investigation, either by fine or imprisonment; the provision of the boats and establishment to be left to the zemindars as at present, and the expense to be defrayed by the usual levy of tolls on all goods, passengers, and cattle, in the same manner as is now practised; the rates to be established by the Magistrate and made as public as possible at every ferry and mofussil cutcherry, and a weekly report to be made to the Magistrate by police officers stationed in the vicinity of ferries, or by a person deputed by them, of the state of boats, &c., &c. No time should be lost in adopting some efficient means regarding the ferries in this zillah, as these rivers generally attain their greatest height early in June, and the numerous lives annually sacrificed makes it a most desirable object to get them placed upon a proper footing with as little delay as possible.

10. The strictest orders should be issued in all the cities and principal towns prohibiting any kind of encroachment upon the public road and streets, either by the erection of houses, digging of ditches, or excavating of earth for raising the flooring of the houses, as is usually practised. The Magistrate should frequently inspect the state of those towns near his place of residence, and the officers of police be held responsible to him for every encroachment which may be made. On all occasions which may offer in consequence of fire or otherwise, the inhabitants should be obliged to rebuild their houses in a regular and even manner at such distance from each other as the Magistrate may direct; and any person attempting to build a house out of the regular line pointed out, or to excavate earth near the streets, should be fined in proportion to his ability, and obliged to remove the building or fill up the excavation immediately under pain of corporal punishment or slight imprisonment in the zillah jail at the discretion of the Magistrate. Every inhabitant should also be obliged to sweep and clean and remove all filth, dirt, and other nuisance from that part of the street immediately opposite to his house and the ground he occupies.

11. The most certain mode of preventing accidents by fire would be the absolute prohibition of all straw *chappers* and the tiling of all houses within the precincts of the towns and cities. The out-houses, in which the natives generally cook their victuals, should most positively be tiled; but as the generality of the inhabitants are too poor to afford tiles, and the difficulty of procuring them would be great in most parts of the country, the houses should be placed at regular distances instead of each joining the other as at present; and during the dry season the ridges of each house should be lined with water-pots, and the whole of the *chappers* covered with a mixture of sand and clay. It is a known fact that most of the accidents which occur by fire are occasioned by incendiaries, who either to enhance the price of grass and other materials, or with a view to plunder, set fire to the large bazaars, gunges, &c., during the dry season, when, from the prevalence of the stormy westerly wind, it is generally impossible to put a stop to the conflagration. The laws at present in force are not perhaps sufficiently severe in these cases, and was a regulation enacted making every species of arson capital, I conceive it would have the best effect in the prevention of all such accidents. The prostitutes in every town should be fixed in one particular part of the suburbs, and on no account be allowed within the precincts of the towns. As the health of the inhabitants in every situation, but particularly in crowded towns, must be materially affected by the properties of the water consumed, tanks might be formed in convenient situations, or large pucca wells might be sunk at a very moderate expense within the large towns and cities for the regular supply of the inhabitants; in either case measures should be adopted to preserve the water pure and good by preventing all kind of dirt and dust being thrown into the tanks and wells, and the natives from washing in them, under the severest penalties. The great difficulty there would be in deterring them from their usual practice of resorting to tanks for

this purpose makes the sinking of large wells the most advisable, except in particular situations, when a tank may be necessary to drain off superfluous or stagnant water It may be proper to notice in this place the numerous accidents which happen to children from the great number of small ring (Bengali) wells in and about all the towns and cities, and which, not being raised above the level of the surrounding earth, or defended by any kind of railing, are dangerous in the extreme to adults as well as children. These small wells should be entirely prohibited in the towns and upon the edge of the public roads, and would, on large wells being sunk, be wholly useless in all situations. When allowed, the owner should be obliged to raise them several feet above the level of the ground, and to surround them by a strong wooden railing, a wicker-work made of bamboos, to prevent the approach of children and warn the unwary passenger of his danger. Where tanks are sunk they can be done by the convicts; wells must be made by labourers hired for the purpose, and the expense of each well of ten feet diameter may be estimated at the average of Rs. 300, and in proportion for larger dimensions, bricks, lime, and every other article included. The whole of this district is full of swamps and large bodies of stagnant water, but there are few which could be drained off without incurring an enormous expense.

Immediately to the north, and adjoining the garden grounds of the European inhabitants of this station, are two very extensive pieces of low marshy ground and stagnant water, the stench from which at particular seasons of the year is extremely offensive, and the exhalations from which must be highly prejudicial. It would not, from the lowness of the situation, be practicable to drain them entirely, but by deepening one end of the morass in the dry season and raising the other parts with the excavated earth every benefit might be attained, and at a moderate expense by employing convicts. The practice of digging large pits and gullies in all the towns and villages for the purpose of raising the flooring of the houses (as noticed in paragraph 7,) should be particularly prohibited, and the earth wanted by the inhabitants should be taken from one or more particular spot to be pointed out by the Magistrate, which would, in the course of time, form a tank or tanks productive of general utility to the whole of the inhabitants.

12 The communication by water would be very materially improved and facilitated by removing the bar of sand now formed at the head of the River Ghagut, and by diverting the main body of water into the old channel, which being shut up for several years past no boats can approach nearer than four miles to the town of Rungpore, except at very high rises of the river, in the height of the rains; nor is the Ghagut navigable in any part during the dry months owing to the bar above noticed To render the opening of the old or eastern channel safe, it would be necessary to make three small cuts across as many narrow peninsulas formed by the zigzag direction of the current, which would otherwise bear with great force on weak parts of the bank and endanger the town.

13 The whole of the work could be done by convicts was there a sufficient number of them, and the expense would be but trifling, as the head of the old channel is immediately contiguous to the zillah jail, and none of the cuts proposed more than three miles distance from it. One temporary jail would be required at the mouth of the Ghagut, which branches off from the Teesta about sixteen miles to the north-west; and this, with the necessary piles and materials, it is presumed would not exceed the sum of Rs. 300. If done by labourers the expense would be much greater; but whether done by convicts or labourers, the whole should be completed in one season.

14. The immense number of bamboo plantations which grow within and surround the principal towns must not only occasion a stagnation of air highly prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, but the evil is greatly increased by the falling of the leaves in March and April, which, rotting with the first showers of rain, and being mixed with other substances, taint the whole air with putridity. To remove such nuisances ought to be a primary object, and will be attended with no other expense than that of paying the proprietors for the plantations so cut at the usual nerick of the country. It is not proposed to destroy the whole of such plantations, but merely to thin them in such way as to admit of a free circulation of air. For, as trees are known to absorb a great quantity of mephitic air, occasional clumps of bamboos are useful in a country so thinly wooded as this district is in general; but when once reduced to what may be conceived a proper number, the inhabitants

should be prohibited from planting any in future without leave being first obtained from the Magistrate. The spot of ground occupied by the European residents at this station is completely surrounded by thick groves of bamboos and jungle trees of all kinds, which are planted so very close to the high roads and houses as very materially to obstruct the free circulation of air, besides engendering and harbouring numerous swarms of insects of all kinds, to the great annoyance of the inhabitants. The sanction of Government is therefore earnestly requested for the removal of these plantations, the filling up of the ditches, pits, and gullies, and clearance of the ground in general within a reasonable distance of the Company's factory and the houses occupied by the European residents. There are many very extensive jungles in this district which afford refuge to banditti and destructive animals of all descriptions, and which, if cleared away, would tend very materially to render the climate more healthy, facilitate the apprehension of delinquents, and extension of agriculture. But it is much questioned whether the generality of the zemindars and landholders could be brought to enter heartily into the views of Government in this instance. The natural apathy of the native inhabitants of all classes, their notorious avarice and selfishness, and dread of all innovation, is such that any measure deviating from the common line, whether intended for the general improvement of the country or their own future benefit, is ever viewed with doubt and distrust until they become convinced by actual experience. There are some few, however, more enlightened, who could no doubt be readily induced to engage in such undertakings, and the proprietor of the Bagdowar pergunnah has actually commenced the clearance of a very extensive wood jungle in the middle of that pergunnah. To such men, as the expense is heavy and they can have no returns for a considerable period of time, it might perhaps be advisable to grant a little pecuniary assistance to enable them to go on with efficacy; the aid granted to be in proportion to the extent of the undertaking, the general character of the men, and the probable means of their again reimbursing Government either from the produce of their other estates, the sale of the timber cut down in making the clearance, or otherwise. The grass jungles not requiring the same labour and expense, though equally affording harbour to all destructive animals, could be easily cleared and brought into a state of cultivation by the proprietors without any aid from Government, could they be brought to view their own interest in a proper light, and induced to rent such waste lands at under rates to the ryots for the terms of two, three, or four years, according to the nature of the ground to be cleared. Since the division of the large estates many tracts have been cleared by the new proprietors, who being in general mercantile people and men who have raised themselves by industry and commerce, are not above superintending in person the improvement of their landed property; but the extension of cultivation and clearance of waste lands has been chiefly owing to the introduction of the indigo manufacture in this district, and the laudable encouragement afforded by the proprietors of the several factories, in the vicinity of which very large tracts have within the three last years been brought into the highest state of cultivation. The large sums of money expended by these gentlemen among the ryots for the express purpose of cultivation, and the constant employment afforded to the industrious poor, must, it is presumed, continue to operate highly to the general improvement and advantage of the country.

The preceding queries embrace every object so extensively that it may perhaps appear superfluous to enlarge further on the subject; but as agriculture, commerce, and the general improvement of the country, must ever materially depend upon the efficiency of the police, it may not be unnecessary to notice the very widely extended jurisdiction of the several Magistrates, who, confined to one part of a large and populous extent of country, have it not in their power to superintend and control the native officers, or afford that instantaneous redress of grievances so necessary to the welfare, safety, and property of all classes, but especially so of the poorer inhabitants. Every day's observation proves the impossibility of preventing various acts of oppression and corruption, as well by the immediate officers of police as the moonsifs and others who are placed at distance from the head quarters of the Magistrate; and though a very small proportion of the unjustifiable and oppressive acts of these people are ever brought to his knowledge, there is but too much cause to apprehend that they are very numerous and destructive to the

welfare of the country. Was the authority of the thanadars to be limited to the apprehension of the dacoits and other offenders, to the preventing of tumultuous assemblies, and inspection of the public roads, without being permitted to take cognizance of any matters as at present, their power of doing evil would be in some degree limited, though not entirely done away, so long as they are removed from European inspection and superintendence. The most effectual remedy of such evils, and the most likely plan to ensure a good and efficient police throughout the country, would, I conceive, be the appointment of Deputy Magistrates in every district, to whom the native officers of all descriptions should be held amenable, and to whom all reports should be made for the information of the Chief Magistrate. There can be no doubt that many gentlemen residing in the districts, well qualified by their general character and knowledge of the native languages, would readily undertake the office of Deputy Magistrate without subjecting Government to any additional expense except that of a very slight establishment to enable them to go through the business; and as little doubt can be entertained that the most beneficial consequence would result to the country at large from such appointment, as instantaneous redress would be afforded of all petty grievances, the native officers be deprived of the power of oppression, the apprehension of offenders rendered certain and easy, and the Chief Magistrate be enabled to devote more of his time and attention to the more important parts of his duty, both magisterial and judicial. The want of regular nerick or table of rates for servants' wages and labourers' pay of all description is productive of much inconvenience, and often subjects the employer to exorbitant demands, as well as the employed to inadequate remuneration. I beg leave, therefore, to suggest the propriety of the Magistrates being authorized to fix the monthly wages of servants and daily labourers of all descriptions on a permanent footing, to be regulated by the established customs and usages of the different pergunnahs; a discretionary controlling power should also, in my opinion, be vested in the Magistrate over the markets at the principal towns to enable him to prevent more effectually the injurious practices of forestalling, which the poorer class of inhabitants in particular are subject to in consequence of the grain merchants combining for the purpose of fixing a higher price on their grain than the nature of the seasons and average rates of the mofussil can authorize.

The construction and repairs of the public roads, the management of ferries, and clearance of jungles immediately about the towns, for the better preservation of the health of the inhabitants, are deemed the works most requisite to be first attended to. The regulation respecting ferries should be carried into immediate effect, and the clearance of the bamboos and jungles can be completed during the rainy season, whilst the convicts cannot be employed. The widening of streets and regulation respecting fires must be carried into execution gradually as opportunities offer, and the opening of the rivers, digging of tanks, and draining of stagnant marshy grounds when the roads are completed.

If the market-places were established out of the towns, instead of being in the centre of them; as at present, I am convinced it would tend greatly to render the air more pure; for, independent of the putrid smell during market time, the place is left covered for some time afterwards with remnants of putrid fish, rotten fruit, &c., &c. Where there is at present only one market-place in the principal towns, I would recommend two for the greater accommodation of the inhabitants, and to be placed in the north and south suburbs, as the general direction of the wind is from east to west.

In addition to the small tolls proposed at the bridges, I conceive that a very considerable sum might be levied annually by a tax of 20 per cent. or more on all the lakhiraj lands throughout the country, and by imposing a tax on all horses, carriages, palanquins, and *chattahs* kept and used by the native inhabitants. I am induced to propose this latter assessment from observing the very great increased and increasing number of horses and palanquins, &c., brought into use by all descriptions, and which being articles of real luxury are in my opinion the fairest objects of taxation. To any man who can afford a palanquin, the payment of Rs. 2 per mensem, or Rs. 24 annually, could not be attended with any inconvenience or distress, and I beg leave to propose this sum as the amount to be levied on each palanquin, Rs. 12 per annum on each horse and covered wheel

carriage, and Rs. 4 on every *chattah* carried by servants. The whole to be levied by delivering out licenses annually. That this would amount to a very considerable sum in the aggregate may be readily imagined when it is stated that palanquins or horses are kept by almost every subordinate officer belonging to the court, and by every gomastah and vakeel of the several zemindars, exclusive of the principal merchants and traders throughout the district. No man of these several descriptions is now seen without some such conveyance or a *chattah* carried by servants, and this increase may be fairly calculated at a hundred-fold within the period of the last six years. It is only on such luxuries that I conceive a tax can be imposed, for assessment on any of the common necessaries of life would bear hard, and operate as a severe hardship upon the industrious poor, who are the least able to contribute to the exigencies of Government. I shall esteem myself particularly happy if any of the ideas I have now suggested appear likely to answer the ends proposed by the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council, and I beg leave to transmit herewith, as appropriate to the subject, a copy of my letter of the 22nd June 1799 to the Committee of Police upon the general subject of the police of this district.

No. 28.

PAPERS ON INDIGO DISPUTES, 1801.

Complaints of the Zemindars.

Translate of a representation delivered by the Zemindars, Talookdars, and other Landholders, in the District of Rungpore.

In the mehals dependent on our estates several gentlemen, agreeably to the undermentioned list, have erected indigo factories, and whether the ryots will or not, they make advances and cause them to cultivate indigo. The ryots who are disinclined to receive advances have money forcibly put into their hands and written engagements taken from them. Several ryots refusing to execute *suttahs*, or written engagements, have complained to the Judge of the zillah of indigo advances being forced upon them, whereupon he has issued an order of endorsement on the petition for the money to be received back, referring it to the gentlemen at the indigo factories. When the gentlemen have placed *mohuseels* on the ryots, confined them, and having obtained a paper of *razinamah* caused it to be delivered into the adawlut, the ryots after accepting advances are released, who, from terror and apprehension, without preferring their grievances to the adawlut, have and continue to abscond, by which means the Government revenue suffers considerable losses. The ryots who received advances for indigo have their malgoozari lands measured by an ameen on the part of the factories, and if, on a computation, the ryots shall not have cultivated indigo adequate to their advances, the product of their jote lands, on which tobacco, rice, &c., have been cultivated, is destroyed and indigo planted. We are ruined in the supplies of mango and kautal trees, and such as do not bear fruit, as also in bamboos and grass. In many places where factories are established for the manufacture of indigo, pottahs have not been granted by us, neither do we receive the rent thereof; and in some places, contrary to all custom, our farmers are taken, our signatures affixed, and pottahs granted. In other places, again, the agents stationed at the factories on behalf of the gentlemen, not confining themselves to their own affairs, issue *suttahs* in the mofussil and create trouble. They prevent us granting a pottah to a ryot for lands which have been relinquished by a *suttadar* ryot who has absconded. In Regulation VII, A.D. 1799, appertaining to the collections, it is ordered that if a ryot does not punctually discharge his rent the products of the land are subject to distraint in liquidation thereof. We are, however, unable to levy distress upon the ryots who have received advances on account of indigo when they fall into arrears of rent, for, upon paiks being sent by us to demand the revenue from the *suttadar* ryots, the people of the factories beat the paiks and release the defaulters. These are the causes of such considerable losses to the revenue, and debar us the means of punctual payment, and hence subject our estates to sale. As the collections are vested in you, we trust that this

representation be communicated to the Board of Revenue, that measures may be adopted to prevent the coercive and injurious means used by the indigo gentlemen, that we may be enabled to pay the revenue, and our estates secured to us.'

List of Factories.

Mr. B. Marsh	1 at Chiniputter	Pergunnah Kankneah.	
	1 „ Doorakoti	Ditto.	
	1 „ Batrees Hazari	Ditto.	
	1 „ Budchurcherrah	Ditto	Tepa.
	1 „ Paunbari	Ditto	Cargeha'
Mr. Wroughton	1 „ Booribarry	Ditto.	
	1 „ Moddottee	Ditto.	
	1 „ Dimlah	Ditto.	
	1 „ Koondi	Ditto.	
Mr. C. Todd	1 „ Gunja Cherrah	Ditto.	
	1 „ Deoti	Ditto	Futtehpore.
	1 „ Metapuker	Ditto	Futtehgungepore.
Mr. R. Brydie	1 „ Kishoregunge	Ditto	Cargehaut.
Mr. W. Terraneux	1 „ Tengunmari	Ditto.	
Mr. J. Fulton	1 „ Hatibandah	Ditto	Burrobilah.
	1 „ Balluah	Ditto.	

(Sd.) Parbutty Chowdharain and 12 others.

RUNGPORE,
The 10th April 1801.

A. W. WRIGHT,
Collector.

Reply of the Planters.

Dated Rungpore, the 22nd April 1801.

From—MASON TODD, AND OTHERS, Planters,

To—A. WRIGHT, ESQ., Collector of Zillah Rungpore.

WE have been favoured with the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant, covering a translate of a petition from several zemindars and other description of landholders residing in this district, which imputes to us and to our servants certain irregularities injurious to them and detrimental to the revenue of Government.

In order to develop the causes which have induced the petitioners to bring forward this heterogeneous mass of calumny and falsehood, it is necessary for us to revert to the first establishment of our factories and introduction of the indigo manufacture into this district.

A period of more than six years has elapsed since, under the sanction of Government, we erected our works and gave out advances for the cultivation of the plant. The infancy of every new establishment in a country like this is generally attended with great and unavoidable difficulties, and require incessant labour and assiduity to rear to maturity. In this particular branch of business we have to encounter the rooted prejudices of the natives, who are notorious for their aversion to every species of innovation, and more especially to that which relates to the cultivation of their lands. These prejudices indeed soon gave way to the profits and noted advantages which the ryots found they should derive from the growth of indigo, and they even became eager to receive our advances. But we had still to encounter a secret interest and hidden influence of another nature which continued to operate in frustrating our best exertions and preventing us from reaping the full benefits of our labours and heavy outlay of specie.

The nature of our business rendering a constant, intimate, and confidential intercourse with the cultivators who receive our advances both necessary and indispensable, it was readily perceived by the landholders that the many heavy and unlawful exactions which they had been in the constant practice of levying with

impunity on their ryots must of necessity come to our knowledge, and they had no sooner reason to apprehend that the information which the ryots would receive from us of the illegality of such exactions would be likely to check the progress of their rapacious and unauthorized proceedings, then every means was used to intimidate the ryots from having any intercourse with us, and every other species of obstruction thrown in the way of our pursuit. Most of the zemindars positively enjoined their dependents not to receive our advances or cultivate indigo upon any consideration; and to such a length did some of them proceed, that it was publicly proclaimed by beat of drum in many places, but particularly in Kakinea, that any ryot daring to receive advances for indigo should have his house burnt down, his property confiscated, and himself and family turned out of the pergunnah. That this was not altogether an idle threat the records of the Dewanny Court affords some proof, damages having actually been decreed in the case of one of the unhappy sufferers who had the resolution to apply for justice against his oppressors. We esteem it unnecessary to dwell any longer on the difficulties and obstruction we have invariably experienced from the undue influence exerted by many of the petitioners, and shall proceed to reply specifically. In answer to that part of their petition which states it is owing to our harsh and illegal measures that their ryots abscond and the revenues fall deficient, we do most solemnly aver that in no one instance within our knowledge has any ryot ever absconded in consequence of any maltreatment on our part or on that of any of our servants, and that no maltreatment of the nature alleged has ever been exercised by us.

During a period of upwards of six years, in which we have had dealings with several thousands of the inhabitants of this district, among whom we have had occasion to disburse many lakhs of rupees, it must necessarily have happened that large balances have accumulated; yet we appeal to the records of the Dewany Court for the number of the suits instituted by us, and to the testimony of the ryots themselves, as the most convincing evidence we can adduce of the leniency of our proceedings. The total number of suits instituted by us in the course of the above period does not amount to twenty; and although they have been decreed in our favour in every instance, yet in no one single instance have we ever required such decrees to be enforced. Our object in instituting them was not to ruin or unnecessarily distress any man, but to prove to the idle and negligent that the means were in our power of forcing payment of our just demands, and thereby convince them of the necessity which existed of their using a due degree of diligence in their business, necessary to enable them to adhere to the engagements they had entered into. That the ryots have absconded, however, and do continue to abscond in considerable numbers, is but too true; and the cause of their doing so, by which we sustain great losses, we think it incumbent on us to point out and develop for our own justification.

With a view to guard against every undue exaction from the ryots on the part of their landlords, it is expressly ordered by Government that a form of the pottahs to be granted shall be deposited for public inspection in the principal cutcherries of the several pergunnahs, that no other form of pottah shall be esteemed valid, and that on no account shall any additional sums be levied from the under-tenants than what is expressly stated in his pottah. Had this wise and salutary regulation been generally carried into effect, the ryot would have obtained a just idea of his own rights, and an effectual check been given to the system of exaction which it was the intention of Government to restrain and do away with entirely. Our intimate knowledge of most parts of the district enables us to assert that in scarcely any one pergunnah had regular pottahs been granted to the under-ryots, or any form of such pottahs ever been made public at the head cutcherries in conformity to this regulation. It must not therefore excite any astonishment that, after the lapse of so many years since the promulgation of the decennial settlement, the respective rights of landlord and tenant should to this day remain unknown to the latter, and that the ancient system of extortion on the part of the former still continues to operate in this district. The numerous bodies of ryots who perpetually resort with complaints of this nature, and the orders repeatedly issued by the court of this zillah regarding the demands and payments of mofussil *khurcha*, evidently point out to what cause we must attribute the absconding of the ryots, the depopulation of several talooks, and the consequent

loss of revenue to the zemindars. We are certain that this takes place most frequently in talooks where no factories are established nor any indigo is cultivated. Numbers of men who are engaged with, and indebted to us, would have been obliged to fly from the avaricious gripe of their landlords had they not been saved from utter ruin and enabled to remain and carry on their cultivation by means of the pecuniary aid we have afforded, and generally do afford them on such occasions, and we can at any time bring them forward when called for to prove the truth of this assertion. It is solely from the labour of the ryots and the produce of their lands that we can expect to be reimbursed for the money we advance; and it cannot therefore be reasonably supposed that we should so far forget or totally neglect our own immediate interest as to use any coercive measures likely to make those indebted to us abscond.

The ryot who receives our advances at the end of the year is thereby enabled to pay his heaviest kists without disposing of his cattle, rice, or other products at an under valuation, or else, as it often happens, be obliged to take up money at the usurious interest of from 20 to 30 per cent. per month for the purpose of liquidating such demands. We receive the plant which he has produced at stipulated rates, specified in his engagement, during the ensuing rains, and on the 31st October invariably adjust all accounts, when, if a ryot's deliveries exceed the amount of advances given, he receives the surplus without further delay or trouble. If on the contrary he stands indebted to us, he is charged interest upon the balance only at the rate of 12 per cent. per annum, and not upon the amount advanced. Such interest, as well as the balance so settled, is invariably allowed to lay over until he can pay the amount in weed during the ensuing season; and the better to enable him to do this, a further advance is never refused to be given if called for or found anywise necessary. Hence, we trust it must evidently appear that the ryots are supplied with money to carry on a cultivation which is profitable to them free from all interest for a whole year, and that they are consequently enabled to pay to Government with more than usual ease and certainty that very revenue which we are charged by the petitioners with rendering defective.

That the establishment of indigo factories in this district has been attended with a considerable extension of cultivation, and consequent increase rather than any diminution in the zemindar's receipts of revenue, is so well known and obvious a fact, that we scarcely believe the complainants themselves would have the face to contradict it if appealed to individually, notwithstanding they have been led by designing and interested motives to combine in making general assertions which tend to show the contrary. From an erroneous opinion entertained by us in the commencement of our business, that high waste lands were well calculated for this cultivation, and from a certain knowledge that they would be more easily procurable, we were unfortunately induced to erect almost all our works in the vicinity of extensive tracts of this description, which had lain waste from time immemorial. The unexpected labour we encountered, and the losses we sustained in consequence of this error for the first two or three years, were such as must have obliged us to have relinquished the pursuit altogether had not the ryots in the meantime become very generally convinced of the advantages that were to be derived from taking over advances and cultivating other grounds, especially such as would yield indigo without interfering with the other crops they were accustomed to raise from them. From this period we found no difficulty in procuring land of every description, and the ryots, stimulated to more than ordinary industry by the encouragements we afforded them, very soon brought into complete cultivation the greater part of the lands in question which had so long lain waste and unproductive of any revenue to the zemindars. We speak from local knowledge, and are pretty certain of being within the bounds of truth, when we estimate the number of beeghas so brought into cultivation at from 20,000 to 25,000. This extension of cultivation in so short a time cannot be attributed to any sudden increase of population, since no immigration of new ryots has taken place during the period alluded to; and as it is an incontestable fact that very considerable tracts of waste lands of the same description which lay out of the neighbourhood of any of our factories still remained in the same state they were a hundred years ago, we trust it will not be thought unreasonable in us to conclude that our exertions, combined with the encouragement we have uniformly afforded to the

cultivators, must have contributed greatly to produce this beneficial change, and consequently that neither the ryots nor the zemindars can have suffered from the establishment of our factories on their estates, or from the measures we have adopted in the general conduct of our business.

In our engagements with the ryots, it is specifically agreed that should the quantity of land they may have actually cultivated with indigo prove upon measurement to be less than the quantity of land they engaged to cultivate, they will immediately make good the deficiency, not by a return of advance or in money, but by appropriating the further quantity of land wanted to complete their engagements; and if a written engagement between man and man is to be considered valid, we presume it cannot with justice be imputed to us as a fault our calling upon those men whose lands are deficient to make good the same. In order to ascertain such deficiencies we are obliged to employ a number of ameens, whose business it is to measure the lands agreed for and keep an accurate account of the state of the cultivation; but the expense of such ameens, as well as of all other descriptions of people employed by us, is borne by us solely, and not, as is the case with the zemindars, who charge it to the ryot. Without such measurement we know not in what manner it would be possible either for us or the ryot to ascertain the fulfilment or otherwise of his engagement; and should it, as sometimes happens, appear that any part of the land actually agreed for (and which is always pointed out some months before the indigo can be sown) has been dishonestly appropriated to any other cultivation, we know of no law or regulation which forbids us from calling upon the ryot to make good his engagement and sow them in the article for which we expressly gave him our advances This is a case, however, which has very rarely occurred; for the fact is that very few situations which are chosen for the growth of indigo are fit for the cultivation of any other article at the same season of the year. The tobacco, which, according to the petitioners' assertion, we sometimes destroy, is invariably off the ground before we can venture to sow the indigo, except indeed those ryots who are aware of the superior advantages to be derived from an early crop should be tempted to sow a very trifling proportion of their lands remarkably early in the season; and in this case the removal of the tobacco plants, so far from being necessary for the introduction of the indigo seed, must almost inevitably be attended with the loss of the indigo, by exposing the young plants unprotected to the dry parching winds of spring; and as the lands most favourable for indigo are in general too arid and high for rice, which is almost the only article cultivated in this district at the same season of the year with indigo, it can happen but rarely that any fields of this grain are destroyed for the purpose of planting the latter.

In the erection of extensive buildings the consumption of a considerable quantity of firewood for burning bricks has been unavoidable; but the wood chiefly used by us for this purpose has been *peepul*, *butt*, *goolar*, *saorah*, and other jungle trees, which produce neither revenue to the owner of the land nor benefit to the ryot. A few solitary instances may have occurred of our servants cutting old and unfruitful mango trees, but seldom without the permission of the zemindar or ryot on whose grounds they stood; and we aver, without fear of contradiction, that no demand has ever been made by either for any trees of any description so destroyed which has not instantly been made good. The bamboos and grass, by the supplies of which also the petitioners state themselves to be ruined, we have always understood to be as much the property of the ryots on whose lands they grow as any other article they may cultivate; and as such we have never thought of applying to the zemindar for these articles, but purchased them at once from the ryots, who have in every instance received an advanced price beyond what they could have obtained for them in the common markets of the country. That our consumption of bamboos and grass could ever prove injurious to the ryots or zemindars must be altogether inconceivable to any person at all acquainted with this district, which is literally covered with them. The kind of bamboos most commonly used by us are so cheap as to sell in general at eighty, and in some places where we have factories at the rate of from one hundred to one hundred and forty the rupee; and as to grass, there are many of our factories at which no other has been used than the *khuss*, which grows wild and common on the banks of all the rivers, and in such abundance that the ryots burn it down annually to prevent its remaining as a cover for destructive animals.

With regard to the charge of not having pottahs for the lands on which our factories are built, and of not having paid the rents thereof, the production of such pottahs and of our receipts for the regular annual payment of such rents whenever demanded is, we conceive, the most satisfactory answer we can give; and these we are ready to produce when called upon. The imputation of our taking farmers or using any means to induce them to affix the names of any of the petitioners to pottahs, we solemnly assert to be without any foundation in truth.

To the charge of obstructing the zemindars in distraining the products of their lands for arrears of revenue, we can only assert it as a truth that we know of no one single instance in which they have ever experienced the slightest opposition of this nature either from us or any of our servants.

The detail we have given is, we trust, sufficient to afford any one an opportunity of forming a pretty accurate judgment as to the falsehood or otherwise of the several charges alleged against us; but should any further proof of the rectitude of our conduct be thought necessary by a higher authority, we shall with great cheerfulness appeal to the testimony of every disinterested man in the district, and to that of the very men whom it is said we have injured and oppressed—the whole body of ryots with whom we have had any transaction in the course of our business (the number of such persons cannot be less than twenty thousand); and it is entirely owing to the light which they have received from us, the knowledge they have acquired of their own rights, and the consequent check which the rapacious and illegal proceedings of the zemindars have met with, that we conceive ourselves indebted for the present charges which are prepared against us—charges which we have strong reasons for suspecting have been brought forward at the instigation of a few individuals, who have in a surreptitious manner procured the signatures of the majority of the petitioners, in the estates of several of whom we have no transactions whatever. We doubt not of being able to make good this insinuation in the course of a few days, when we shall again do ourselves the honour of addressing you on the subject. In the meantime we have to request that should you deem it expedient to transmit the petition to the Board of Revenue, you will do us the favour to forward this letter accompanying it.

No. 29.

MR. HARTWELL'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF BYKUNTPORE AND THE FRONTIER, 1810.

[NOTE.—The marginal annotations reproduced from the letter copybook are in the handwriting of Mr. Sisson.]

Dated Rungpore, the 25th June 1810.

From—G. HARTWELL, ESQ., Acting Magistrate,

To—G. DOWDESWELL, ESQ., Secy. to the Govt. in the Judicial Dept.

IN obedience to the orders of the Hon'ble the Vice-President in Council, communicated in your letter of the 4th ultimo, I proceeded on the 25th of last month to the thana of Sanyasikata.

2. The local situation of the boundaries of that jurisdiction in the north-west, north, and north-east directions, is peculiarly adapted to the successful operations of dacoits, and the place at which the police thana is stationed does not appear to me best calculated for the purposes of protection.

3. Thana Sanyasikata does not extend much more than one mile towards the south from the site of the thana itself, and being on the banks of the Mahanuddee (which at that particular place divides the district of Rungpore from the territories of the Rajah of Nepal and the district of Purneah) has no jurisdiction directly west.

4. Although I conceive it would be more beneficial were the head officers of the police establishment removed to a more advanced position, I would by no means recommend that the number of burkundauzes at present entertained for the security of that frontier be reduced; the number of men attached to that

thana is only 20; and as Bochun Chowdhry, a notorious bad character, resides about two miles on the opposite side of the Mahanuddee, it would be highly inexpedient in my opinion, by reducing the force, to afford him an opportunity of again encouraging depredations on the Company's territories. I therefore beg leave to suggest the removal of the darogah and mohurir, and the continuance of a guard consisting of a jemadar and twenty men at the village of Sanyasikata.

5. Having remained three days at Sanyasikata, I proceeded in a northerly direction, and halted at a place called Benakooree, on the banks of the Sannuddee, which is situated between the talook of Fallacotta and the forests which extend to Bhootan. This position appears to me best calculated for the station of the darogah, because it is about two koss only from the foot of the jungle, is about the same distance from the borders of Dabgong, will leave Fallacotta in its rear, and thus the escape of offenders will be rendered more difficult, and the darogah will be enabled to obtain information and apply the means of prevention and detection with more expedition and effect than it is possible for him to do in his present situation. I therefore beg leave to recommend that a darogah, a mohurir, a jemadar, with twenty burkundauzes, be stationed at Benakooree, on the banks of the Sannuddee.

6. On the following day after my arrival at Benakooree, I proceeded to Julpigoree, a distance of about eight or nine koss, and although I am anxious to afford security to the lives and property of the inhabitants of pergunnah Bykuntpore with the least possible expense to Government, I am compelled to recommend an additional guard at an intermediate station called Melamelee. A jemadar with ten burkundauzes, in addition to the assistance of the police officers when necessary, will in my opinion effectually prevent the ingress of dacoits by the roads leading to the jungles at and near Melamelee; and adverting to the nature of the country, as well as to the number of persons forming the parties infesting those boundaries, the strength of the post is confined within the narrowest limits that duty will permit me to suggest.

Bykuntpore depredations.

This pergunnah seems an awkward kind of Bykoonth.

7. At a place called Belacoba Shikarpore, situated between Melamelee and Julpigoree, a guard of ten burkundauzes is entertained by the present farmer of Bykuntpore for the sole purpose of protecting the neighbouring villages. The loss sustained by the proprietor of this estate within these few years, occasioned by the depredations of dacoits, is estimated, I was informed, at upwards of Rs. 5,000; and although the real loss may have been exceeded in this estimation, the country near the jungles through which I passed exhibited evident proofs of having been formerly in a state of cultivation, though now no habitation is within a considerable distance of those lands. I am therefore induced to believe that the farmer or zemindar will not be desirous of withdrawing this support to the protection of the pergunnah.

* If this be true, it is the interest of the Bhootan Government to give every possible encouragement to depredation in our territories, and there remains no difficulty in accounting for the little regard which they pay to any application from us to recover plundered property and to detect dacoits.

8. I believe it frequently happens, and an instance has occurred since my arrival at this station, that the person who has been plundered by dacoits immediately after quits the Company's territories with his family and places himself under the authority of the Bhootan Government. By this measure they consider themselves less subject to a repetition of such acts of violence, and obtain lands on easier terms than are granted to them in pergunnah Bykuntpore.

9. At Julpigoree a guard is stationed consisting of a jemadar and thirty burkundauzes, which furnishes an outpost at Rangdhamalee of ten men. I visited Rangdhamalee, which is at the edge of the jungle and on the western bank of the Teesta nuddee. This guard I consider to be of essential benefit to the surrounding villages, and were it withdrawn I have no doubt but that dacoities would more frequently occur. On the opposite bank of the river is situated the village of Chengmaree, where the famous dacoit Mohuntram* resides, enjoying the fruits of his labour in the Company's territories and in the greatest security under the protection of the Bhootan Government.

* He is now within the four walls of the Rungpore Jail.

10. I beg leave in this place to notice that the thana denominated Fakirgunge is not above half a mile distant from the guard at Julpigoree, where the

fixed establishment is a jemadar and ten burkundauzes, besides a darogah and mohurir. The vicinity of these two police-stations renders it expedient to abolish one or the other; and as the present jurisdiction of thana Fakirgunge cannot with propriety be included in any other neighbouring thana, I beg leave to suggest, under the following arrangement, that the guard at Julpigoree be withdrawn.

11. The first step I take the liberty of submitting for the sanction of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council is the removal of the darogah and mohurir of the thana of Sanyasikata to Benakooree, and with him should be appointed a jemadar and twenty burkundauzes. It also appears to me advisable that the jemadar and twenty men remaining at Sanyasikata should be subject to the authority of the darogah of Benakooree.

12. I have already stated that a jemadar and ten men appear to me sufficient at Melamelee, five of whom I propose should be transferred from the Julpigoree guard, and the remainder with the jemadar will form part of the additional expense which this arrangement will require. Melamelee being at present within the jurisdiction of the Sanyasikata thana, I beg leave to recommend that this guard be likewise placed under the control of the darogah of Benakooree.

13. In submitting this plan I take it for granted that no objection will occur to the continuation of the guard entertained by the farmer of pergunnah Bykuntpore at Belacoba Shikarpore; but should I be mistaken, its place must be supplied on the part of Government.

14. In consequence of the proposed removal of the Julpigoree guard, it will be necessary to strengthen the thana of Fakirgunge with ten additional men, as the duties incident to a thana burkundauz may call so many away at the same time that the thana itself may be exposed to attack. This consideration might not, however, operate was the thana of Fakirgunge otherwise situated than on the banks of a river on the opposite side of which the principal dacoits reside. The risk is therefore, I conceive, of a nature too serious to admit of the reduction of the Julpigoree guard without the addition I have the honour to suggest.

Fakirgunge.

The late dacoities are the clearest proof of the necessity of a very strong body of men being judiciously distributed throughout this thana as well as that of Benakooree.

15. The guard at Rangdhamalee, as I have before observed, is essentially necessary, and although the men stationed there cannot restrain the incursions of Mohuntram and his gang by the different roads that lead through the jungle, they may afford protection to the villages immediately north of Julpigoree, and increase the risk of apprehension by compelling the dacoits to go a circuit which they would not otherwise have to perform. I therefore hope that the jemadar of Julpigoree may be transferred to the guard at Rangdhamalee, and fifteen burkundauzes be permanently stationed at that post, subject to the authority of the darogah of Fakirgunge.

16. By disposing of the guard at Julpigoree in the mode I have had the honour to suggest, the additional expense in carrying into execution this arrangement will amount only to the sum of Rs. 111 monthly, which I trust will be considered as moderate as the nature of the duty to be performed will admit.

17. Although I am aware that the accompanying sketch has no pretensions to accuracy, it may tend to elucidate the subject of this address by showing the positions at which I have recommended the guards to be stationed; and should this arrangement meet with the approbation of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council, I confidently hope that dacoity will be in a great measure suppressed in pergunnah Bykuntpore.

18. Among other circumstances which encourage the depredations of dacoits in that part of the district is the dispersed state of its inhabitants within the precincts of thana Sanyasikata. There are about 335 geerees,* to each of whom are attached a few ryots, who build their huts round the house of their superior. Thus when a gang of dacoits appear, their numbers are so few that any attempt at opposition would be fruitless, and they consequently keep watch at night by turns more with a view of securing their escape than with any *intention* of protecting their property.

This evil prevails more or less throughout the district.

* The term 'geeree' is applied to the headman of a village, who is in a manner responsible to the zemindar for the payment of the revenue of the number of ryots attached to him.

19. Each geeree has distinct limits, and the residence of one is so distant from that of another that had they the inclination to assist

each other, I very much doubt their ability. A few exceptions, however, exist to this general rule, and I was informed that one geeree had been known to beat off a gang of dacoits.

The cause is explained in the 8th paragraph.

All the applications hitherto made to the Bhootan Government for the apprehension of Mohuntram and other notorious offenders have proved ineffectual, and there is no reason to suppose that they will be ever given up by the Power from which they at present receive protection. I distinctly saw the village in which Mohuntram is said to reside, and have every reason to believe that he might be taken had I authority to depute a few men to the opposite side of the Teesta nuddee. He is, however, aware that I have not the power to molest him while he remains without the territories of the Company, and therefore bids defiance to all the exertions made for his apprehension.

I was informed that the number of men forming the gang of which he is the head amounted to about 80. This account may, however, be greatly exaggerated, but it is certain that whenever he makes his appearance his party is always very strong.

I availed myself of the opportunity which the occasion afforded of procuring information respecting Fallacotta. This possession is more extensive, and contains a greater number of inhabitants than I believe is in general supposed. Its breadth from west to east is reckoned upwards of two miles, and from north to south between three and four miles. On my way to Julpigoree I passed through a few of the villages which appeared larger and more populous than those in general of the same description situated in pergunnah Bykuntpore.

Fallacotta is most conveniently situated to render the operations of dacoits successful and secure. It not only offers to the plunderers a safe depository for their ill-acquired property, but is a short stage from the jungles, where every necessary preparation may be carried on to ensure the accomplishment of such designs.

From the best information I was able to procure this talook is formed of 31 geerees, and the estimated number of inhabitants is upwards of 3,500. The mofussil collections are said to amount to about Rs. 1,600, and the fixed annual assessment Rs. 800. This sum, however, is not always remitted to the Bhootan Government, but the amount transmitted in general depends on the integrity of the superintending authority, who is termed the "Katham," is a native of Bhootan, and subject to the immediate control of the Soobah of Dalimcotta.

No military force is kept up in Fallacotta excepting sixteen burkundauzes, eight of whom are Bhooteas, the rest of the description entertained at the police thanas of Government.

No representative is appointed to attend this court on the part of the Bhootan Government, and it has been customary to address all public communications connected with any subject calling for a reference to the Soobah of Dalimcotta, who replies without consulting any superior power. Notwithstanding this circumstance, I have every reason to believe that no arrangement could be made with him of the nature specified in your letter to the Magistrate of the district, under date the 2nd of February last. However, before this subject could be proposed, it was necessary to ascertain whether any lands of the description of those mentioned in the latter part of the second paragraph of the letter above referred to were to be found, and as I have failed in this respect, no further steps of course have been taken to attain the object desired by Government. The only mode that appears to me likely to induce the Bhootan Government to relinquish their right in the talook of Fallacotta is by the payment of the revenue they derive from its possession; and although such a proposition might be suggested, I entertain doubts of acquiescence in the arrangement.

In the event of an offer in money or an equivalent being considered by the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council advisable, I beg leave to state it as my opinion that the transaction should be managed in Calcutta, since I can avail myself of no communication except through those who are interested in opposing the measure. Mohuntram and several of his principal adherents reside at Chengmaree, and it is not to be supposed that the Katham, who is immediately subject to the Soobah of Dalimcotta, would permit them to enjoy the booty they acquired without some gratification both for himself and his superior. I should therefore

expect the greatest opposition in the Soobah of Dalimcotta in concluding any arrangement which would not only deprive him of part of his power, but would contribute to the retrenchment of his present resources.

Mohuntram has succeeded his brother Sunkia Sardar, who was sentenced at the first sessions of 1808 held in this district to thirty-nine stripes of the *tazeeanna* and twelve years' imprisonment, and was afterwards banished to the zillah of Sylhet. No hope can be entertained of the entire suppression of dacoity until Mohuntram is apprehended, as he has no other means of subsistence, and has a numerous list of adherents, who depend upon his exertions for support.

It will be observed by the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council that Mohuntram has lately exchanged his allegiance from the Nepal to the Bhootan Government. This has occurred since Bochun Chowdhry's attendance was required at Beejypore, where I understand he experienced many severities, but more with a view to extortion than as a punishment for the crimes of which he had been guilty. This fact is clearly proved from the subsequent conduct of the Soobah of Beejypore, who, so soon as he obtained the object of his oppression, reinstated Bochun Chowdhry with presents and other marks of distinction. I have before stated that Bochun Chowdhry resides about two miles on the western bank of the Mahanuddee river, but he has not, I believe, since his return afforded protection to Mohuntram. However, I am credibly informed that Machgeer, who crossed the Mahanuddee in the middle of the day and murdered Kamochangeer in the Company's territories, still resides in his family.

This affair took place so lately as 21st of March 1809, and notwithstanding the applications noticed in your letter of the 24th of November last for the delivery of the offender, Bochun Chowdhry still continues to support him.

These several disturbers of the peace of the Company's territories I have every reason to believe might be apprehended had I authority to seize them wherever they might be found; and in this case it would not, I apprehend, be necessary to trespass far on the borders of the neighbouring Powers, and in the event of success the greatest benefit would be derived to the whole pergunnah of Bykuntpore.

Dabgong is another receptacle for stolen property, and this estate is also included in the lands subject to the authority of Bochun Chowdhry, but being situated at the extremity of pergunnah Bykuntpore, is by no means so detrimental as the possession by the Bhootan Government of the talook of Fallacotta.

In submitting this address to the consideration of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council, I am not aware that a more effectual arrangement than that which I have had the honour to suggest can be adopted to prevent the recurrence of the evils experienced on the northern boundaries of this district; and although much may depend on the vigilance and activity of the darogahs of Benakooree and Fakirgunge, dacoity cannot exist to its present extent with such a chain of guards without connivance or palpable neglect in those officers: and as a further measure that appears to me likely to prove beneficial in the apprehension of offenders, I beg leave to propose that both those darogahs be vested with authority to act in either jurisdiction in cases of information wherein their exertions would be attended with beneficial effects and the delay of communication risk the execution of the service.

No. 30.

MR. SISSON'S REPORTS ON THE POLICE.

Dated Rungpore, the 9th January 1814.

From—T. Sisson, Esq., Acting Magistrate,

To—G. Dowdeswell, Esq., Chief Secy. to Govt., Judicial Department.

I beg leave to submit the following remarks to the notice of the Right Hon'ble the Governor-General in Council. They are the result of the maturest deliberation, and as such, if one of my short experience can presume to lay claim to attention, I trust they will appear not altogether unworthy of the consideration of Government.

If the police of Rungpore appears to be in a worse state than that of the adjacent districts, I think the evil may be traced to a combination of the following causes:—

(1.) To the district being exposed to incursion from no less than four different frontiers, namely, Ghoorka or Morung, Bhootan, Nij Behar, and Assam; as also from its bordering upon the Garo Hills, which occasionally send forth swarms of savages whose barbarous ferocity never fails to carry everything before it, whilst inaccessibleness of their mountains bids defiance to every attempt either to seize the present perpetrators or to prevent a recurrence of such inhuman acts of cruelty and depredation.

(2.) From the very ill-defined line of boundary between this district and the contiguous zillahs of Purneah, Dinagepore, Rajshahye, and Mymensingh, which greatly increases the facility which offenders otherwise too readily find in shifting the scene of their depredations to a different jurisdiction whenever they find themselves too narrowly watched and their characters too well known to render it safe to continue their outrages within their own immediate neighbourhood.

(3.) To the very awkward shape of the district, which has arisen partly from the irregularity of the line of frontier, and partly from the originally very improvident division of the country, which comprises the present jurisdictions of Purneah, Dinagepore, Rajshahye, and Mymensingh. This evil altogether precludes the possibility of the district (while it remains in its present form) being subdivided into regular and compact jurisdictions.

(4.) To the very careless and unequal manner in which the district has been subdivided into its several police jurisdictions: as an example, I shall be satisfied in this place with adducing the instance of the very first thana I visited. The residence of the police darogah of Koorgunge, paradoxical as it may appear, is situated full a mile beyond the limits of this district, so that not only has this darogah no authority over the place where he resides, but he is a full mile removed from the nearest part of his jurisdiction.

(5.) To the want of a regular and well organized mofussil or village watch.

(6.) To the general dispersed state of the inhabitants and the construction of their huts, the walls of which are uniformly made of grass and bamboo instead of mud or other still more substantial materials, as in the other districts where I have been stationed.

(7.) To the very dastardly spirit of the inhabitants, which is so deeply rooted in their very constitution that it is almost impossible to rouse them to a spirited resistance in the defence of their own property or in the protection of that of their neighbours.

Lastly.—To the great preponderance of Mussulmans in the scale of population. The general character of this portion of the community renders it unnecessary for me to explain why I consider the above circumstance to operate to the prejudice of the general peace.

I am aware that many of the above causes will be found to exist in other districts, and perhaps to the same extent as here; but there is probably no other district which has all these difficulties to encounter at one and the same time.

I beg to return to the consideration of such of the above detailed causes as appear to require further elucidation:—

(1.) As to the district being exposed to incursion from the frontiers of Ghoorka, Bhootan, Nij Behar, and Assam.

The Government are already in possession of my sentiments with regard to Nij Behar, and I must beg to defer giving my final opinion as to the remedies which it may appear practicable to apply to the prevention of future incursions from the other states until I have visited all those parts of the district which are exposed to them. In the meantime I can venture to give it as my deliberate opinion that until the local police officers are empowered to pursue all public offenders beyond the limits of the district, and to follow up all traces of the plundered or stolen property which may have been carried beyond our frontier,

neither the utmost exertion on the part of the Magistrate and the local police, nor the most judicious distribution of an increased police establishment, can possibly prove of any substantial advantage in preventing the commission of the enormities at present so lamentably prevalent in the north-western parts of this district.

These enormities are committed not only by strangers; they are often perpetrated by natives of these provinces, who find a ready opportunity of eluding the vigilance of the local police by taking refuge within territories where they are sure to meet with every kind of protection and encouragement. It may be urged that it might prove sufficient to ensure strict attention on the part of the several chiefs to all future applications for the apprehension of particular offenders and the recovery of plundered or stolen property. Allowing such an object to be attained to the fullest extent—a circumstance very problematical and, in my opinion, to the highest degree improbable—what advantage can be reasonably expected when those who will ultimately have to enforce the orders which may be issued agreeably to such requisition will, in nine cases out of ten, prove to be the harbourers of the offenders whom they are expected to apprehend? Besides, before the proposed aid can possibly be arrived at by this circuitous route, the case will have become stale, when all further pursuit is idle, for dacoities must be followed up on the moment, or the opportunity is lost and the case becomes desperate.

With regard to the inequality of the several police jurisdictions, most of the thanas in this district are so very ill arranged that the whole district must be in a manner thrown into one view before I can submit a plan of amendment, which must be weighed with a deliberation proportionate to the importance of the subject. In furtherance of this object, I have called upon the several darogahs for maps of their respective jurisdictions, to be prepared agreeably to one uniform scale; and as I shall make a point of personally visiting as much of the district as possible, I hope ere long to be able to submit, for the consideration of Government, a plan combining all the advantages which local circumstances may appear to admit, though I fear I shall be obliged to defer the completion of any part of such arrangement until I shall have returned to the Sudder Station.

Till within the last four years there was nothing like a regular watch of any description in this district. The zemindars had their paiks, it is true; but they were always employed, as usual, exclusively in the collection of the rents from the ryots, and in escorting the revenue instalments to the Collector's cutcherry. Indeed, in this district nothing more has ever been expected from them. In the year 1809 Mr. Rees, who was the Magistrate, first introduced a system of watch which I have reason to believe had been previously tried in some other districts, and which certainly still prevails, in one shape or other, in many parts of Bengal.

The system I allude to goes among the natives by the name of *golbundee* or *zeenjeerabundee*. The general principles of it seem to be that every eight families throughout the district should constitute one watch, to which each family should contribute one man. That the eight men thus assembled were to meet in the evening at a hut of rendezvous to be erected at the most centrical point of the ward, and to keep watch during the night in two watches of four men each.

A system like this, if properly carried out, must have proved highly salutary, particularly in the district of Rungpore, where the huts of the inhabitants are so thinly scattered over the face of the estates to which they belong as to preclude the possibility of their lives and property being effectually protected by any other means; but unfortunately, as I suppose, from the hands of the Magistrate not being strengthened by any legal power to enforce obedience, and from want of a proper check upon the conduct of the community, whose sluggish apathy requires a constant stimulus to keep them to what one would think due consideration of their own interest would ensure their observing, this well contrived system has gradually fallen into disuse, or rather into that languor of observance which is nearly tantamount to a total discontinuance.

As this system under certain improvements seems to be decidedly the best that can possibly be devised for the protection of the community of this district from robbery and theft, I take the liberty of submitting to the consideration of Government the principles of this system modified and enlarged so as to admit of application to every part of the district.

First, each able-bodied man shall watch in his turn or find a substitute. This is the principle of the English common law (*vide* 2 Han., c. 13, s. 4), and what obtains in a country so jealous of its liberty as Great Britain can hardly be deemed tyrannical.

Each village shall be divided into a certain number of watches; each watch shall be constituted of the houses immediately adjacent to each other, without regard to any difference or division of estate. The number of houses or families to be included in each watch shall be determined by the relative distance of the several houses from each other, or rather on a consideration of how many each set of watchmen may be able effectually to guard.

The number of men constituting each watch shall be regulated with reference to local circumstances, but in no case shall exceed the average of one man per house.

The proportion of watchmen to be given by each house shall be calculated on the aggregate number of able-bodied men which may be included in the ward. Thus if in a watch of eight houses—

Four families contain four men each				...	...	...	16
Two	,,	,,	three ,, ,,	...	...	...	6
Two	,,	,,	one man ,,	...	...	...	2
				Total	...	...	8) 24
							3

each individual's turn will come round every third night; and the first families will contribute a man every night, whilst the two last will only send their man every third night.

Each watch thus arranged shall meet at dusk at a watch-house or hut, which shall be erected in the most centrical part of the ward.

The night shall be divided into two watches—that is, supposing the guard to consist of eight men, four shall patrol while the rest sleep in the watch-house.

The patrol to be made in divisions of two men each; each man to be armed with a *lathee*, and each set of patrols to be furnished with a *singhera* (horn). This horn never to be sounded but on occasions of urgency, such as meeting with robbers, thieves, or other persons in the act of committing a violent breach of the peace. On the sounding of the horn all able-bodied men within the reach of its sound shall arm themselves with sticks or other weapons and collect to the spot. When thus assembled, they shall not only attempt to apprehend or drive off the banditti from the immediate object of their attack, but shall follow them beyond the limits of their own village into the adjoining one, the inhabitants of which shall in like manner join in the pursuit, and thus hue and cry shall be raised from village to village until the felons be taken or all further trace of them be entirely lost. Any neglect in this particular will subject the offenders to such sentence of fine or imprisonment as the Magistrate may think the circumstances of the case appear to call for, not exceeding, however, in any case the limitation prescribed by Section 19, Regulation IX of 1807.

It shall be the duty of the watchmen to apprehend any person who may be taken in the act of committing murder, robbery, house-breaking, or theft, or in the actual commission of any serious breach of the peace, or against whom hue and cry may have been raised, and they shall immediately convey all persons thus apprehended to the darogah of the jurisdiction.

They shall also arrest every suspicious person whom they find lurking about their respective wards at an unreasonable hour of the night, and shall detain him in safe custody till the morning, when all the inhabitants of the ward and the landholder or manager shall meet to determine whether there be sufficient grounds for taking such person before the darogah; and if they agree in the negative, they shall be authorized to release him, making a full report of the case to the thana. If, on the other hand, they find reasonable cause to suspect that he is a bad character,

it shall be their duty to convey him to the thanadar, whose proceedings on the case will be regulated by the provisions of Clause 3, Section 2, Regulation VII of 1811.

It shall be the duty of the several inhabitants comprised in each ward carefully to watch the conduct of every individual who may reside within their limits; and if any person find cause to suspect that the expenses of his neighbour exceed his means, observe that he is in the habit of being from home at unseasonable hours of the night, that he keeps bad company, or that there is otherwise ground for suspecting that he is a dangerous character, the individual who may entertain such suspicion shall communicate his sentiments to the rest of the ward, who, together with the zemindar or manager of the estate, will determine how far there may be reasonable cause for such suspicion, and the result of such investigation, whatever it may be, shall regularly be reported to the darogah, who will submit the case for the decision of the Magistrate.

In mofussil villages the zemindar or manager of the estate, &c., shall be held responsible for the above provisions being carried into effect within the limits of his estate; and if any ryot or other inhabitant within his limits refuse to obey his requisition in this particular, it shall be the duty of the zemindar, &c., to report such disobedience to the police darogah of the jurisdiction, who shall report the circumstances of the case for the final orders of the Magistrate.

In towns the darogah of the jurisdiction shall arrange the watches in concert with the chief men of the place, and report such adjustment for the consideration of the Magistrate.

I beg to call the attention of Government to the necessity of introducing some general system of hue and cry.

In a country where false accusation is so readily supported by a complication of the most deliberate perjuries, there can be no evidence so satisfactory as apprehension in the act or on first pursuit. Direct testimony is to be received with the utmost caution, and this circumspection very properly increases with the magnitude of the charge. Thus it happens that so few of the number of prisoners yearly committed to take their trial are convicted before the Court of Circuit and Nizamut Adawlut, and that each jail delivery lets loose such numbers of confirmed dacoits to commence their depredations with more cunning than before.

If the system I have above suggested were introduced and properly enforced throughout the country, I think it would be scarcely possible, in case of dacoity, for every one of the gang to escape; and if even one be laid hold of, his apprehension must infallibly lead to the discovery, if not to the apprehension, of the rest of the party, and in all probability to the recovery of the plundered property.

I cannot help reverting in this place to what I have already brought to the notice of Government in the 6th paragraph of a letter to your address, under date the 9th March 1812. I allude to the case therein mentioned of a desperate gang of dacoits having been apprehended on a hue and cry in the Chupra district. A short statement of the particulars attending the apprehension of that gang would tend greatly to show what effects may reasonably be expected to result from the system which I propose; and as I have not a sufficiently distinct recollection of the circumstances to furnish such statement, I take the liberty of respectfully recommending that the Magistrate of Chupra may be called upon to furnish a report on this case. The dacoity must have occurred in the year 1808-9.

In the conclusion of this part of my subject it is almost unnecessary for me to observe that I have adhered throughout to the spirit of the English statute and common law, as will appear on referring to Bla. Com. Book 4, cap. 21, pages 293-94, and Statute 3, Ed. 1, c. 9.

Although I conceive that the principles of the watch above proposed are capable of forming the groundwork of general reform in this very essential branch of the police, yet as it might savour of presumption in one of my rank in the service to propose their general adoption, I shall confine my observations to the district under my charge, and with that view shall beg to return to a consideration of the peculiar manner in which the district of Rungpore is inhabited, under the hope that what I may have occasion to say on the subject will show that any system of watch which may be essentially different from what has been above proposed can hold out no reasonable hope of success in protecting the community from robbery. Throughout the interior of this district there is no

such thing as a regular village according to the common acceptation of the term. In whatever quarter I ride I find nothing by which to distinguish one estate from another, the whole face of the country presenting but one continued view of an extensive plain with the huts of the inhabitants irregularly scattered over the most cultivated parts of it. Wherever the ryot finds a spot most conveniently situated for the tillage of the land he rents, there he raises his thatch, and there also his *purjas** build their huts round their superior. If these *purjas* exceed the number necessary for the due cultivation of the land contiguous to his hut, the superior distributes the remainder in such different parts of the land he rents as may appear most convenient for an equal cultivation of the whole.

* A *purja* in this district is one who, not having the means of purchasing a stock of cattle and the necessary implements of husbandry, hires himself to a cultivator of more substance, who supplies him with seed stock and the implements of husbandry, and who, after deducting the advance made on such account, divides an equal share of the crop. The *purja* is not answerable to any one but his ryot, to whom alone the zemindar looks for his malgoozari.

It happens that two or more ryots, who are nearly related to each other, or who may be sharers in one pottah, build their huts close to each other; but in general only one ryot lives in one spot surrounded by his *purjas*, as above described.

There are also situations where particular circumstances induce many villagers to build their huts contiguous to each other; but I have never yet met with a single instance in which great part of the cultivators are not dispersed over the estate as above stated.

I think it necessary to add that I make a point of inquiring at every village or other collection of huts which I visit whether the inhabitants are content under the *golbundee* system, and that I have hitherto invariably found the community highly satisfied with it. They tell me that neither their lives nor property were secure before its introduction, and I think I have seen fear expressed in one or two countenances lest the object of my coming there was to introduce some other system. In some places I find watch-huts, in other places mere platforms of bamboo, and for the most part the villagers point out a clump of bamboos as the spot where they assemble to watch during the night. All this apparent readiness and pretended observance, however, by no means induces me to forego an endeavour to get a more regular and uniform system introduced under the formal sanction of the legislature, for I know the native character too well to be satisfied with an arrangement, however wise, of which the Magistrate has no legal power to enforce the observance.

My object in mentioning the above circumstances is to show that this district is very well prepared to receive the system I propose, which is far from being a mere visionary project; that its introduction would in fact only produce some few alterations in what is already expected of the public, all of which tend rather to the advantage than to the prejudice of the community. Trusting that the want of method which may pervade the above sketch will be indulgently viewed with reference to the peculiar circumstances under which it has been written.

Extracts from letter from Bencoolen, 18th March 1815.

81. The area of this district, which comprises an extent of about 8,000 square miles, is subdivided into 25 police jurisdictions, comprehending an establishment of 339 burkundauzes and 25 pykes. Of these 22 thanas are established over about 4,200 square miles of country west of the Sooneycoss and Berhampootur, and the remaining three in the tract lying east of those rivers. The strength of this establishment, with reference to the western division, far exceeds that prescribed by law, which assigns but 16 thanas for the tract that under the present arrangement has 22 for its protection.

82. With exception to the country east of the Sooneycoss and Berhampootur, to the protection of which, on account of the scantiness of population, the three thanas which have been assigned to it are fully adequate, but little judgment has been shown in the subdivision of the interior of this district; for jurisdictions in the most populous parts of the district, and labouring under circumstances of peculiar local difficulty, have been left of an unmanageable extent, whilst

others under less difficulty of situation and in less populous parts of the district are multiplied beyond necessity.

83. This improvident subdivision appears principally to have arisen from the original arrangement having been regulated by the extent of certain pergunnahs and particular properties rather than by a reference to the general extent of the country and any peculiarities of situation. To take an instance: thana Boda, which is one of the most populous divisions of the district, and one more exposed to local difficulties than any other comprehending the entire pergunnah of that name, comprises an area of 362 square miles; whilst Patgaon, which has a comparatively thin population, being but a small pergunnah, the thana of that name, which has a jurisdiction co-extensive with the pergunnah, comprehends an extent of but 82 square miles. A reference to the margin will show how much the several jurisdictions vary in extent, and I have annexed to each thana the population which Dr. Buchanan has calculated it to contain.

At the late census the density of population in Boda was 298 persons to the square mile, while that of Patgran (Patgaon) was 558. E. G. G.

Thana.	Square miles.	Population.
Kotwallee or Mahigunge	64	50,000
Dhap	344	272,000
Phoorunbary ...	180	86,000
Barney	172	92,000
Patgaon	82	45,000
Fakirgunge	184	73,000
Benakooree	197	88,000
Boda	361	231,000
Dinla	195	94,000
Durwanny	228	142,000
Koonwargunge ...	148	84,000
Mulung	153	82,000
Bugdwar	126	74,000
Peergunge	152	72,000
Sadoolapore	163	147,000
Dewangunge	100	43,000
Bhowanigunge ...	355	157,000
Chilmaree	190	75,000
Wulipore	287	169,000
Barbarry	218	135,000
Nakusarry	250	140,000
Dhubree	1,135	83,000
Rungamuttee ...	1,780	93,000
Currybarry	869	Unknown.

84. The map of almost every thana exhibits so general an irregularity of boundary, and so great a confusion of villages with those of the adjacent jurisdiction, that though I have devoted whole days to the subject, I have found it impracticable to remedy the irregularities of one jurisdiction without adding to those of the jurisdictions round it. Indeed, in a district where the original position of the thanas and the relative extent of their jurisdictions have been left altogether to chance, it was hardly to be expected that it should be otherwise. Under these circumstances I would beg to recommend, as a measure highly conducive to permanent improvement of police, that the whole district west to the Sooneycoss and Berhampootur be subdivided *de novo*. Under a judicious execution of this plan it might be found practicable to provide for a due protection of the interior with a less establishment, and the strength of the police might be disposed of so as to provide far more efficiency for the protection of the country than at present.

84. Should it not appear to Government necessary or expedient to make so general an alteration in the arrangement of the mofussil as has been just proposed, I beg to notice a few particular instances of local inconvenience which it would seem highly advisable to remedy.

86. The thanas of Dewangunge and Bhowanigunge, which adjoin each other on the banks of the Berhampootur at the southern extremity of the district, have their jurisdictions so intermixed, that a map of the one thana would almost include all the villages of the other. Under the above peculiarity, particularly if the recommendation suggested in the 79th and 80th paragraphs be deemed worthy of being followed, the Dewangunge thana might be dispensed with without any disadvantage whatsoever to the police of that quarter. I would recommend the establishment of this thana to be removed beyond the old Teesta, and that the Boda pergunnah, which is far too straggling, populous, and troublesome to be efficiently managed by one establishment, together with such parts of the circumjacent country as may be suggested by their situation, be subdivided into two jurisdictions. Boda is the scene of more dacoity and other heinous crimes than any other division of the district, and this I ascribe principally

In this arrangement care should be taken to defend the parts immediately bordering on Fallacotta, on the south, from incursion from that possession, to which they are at present much exposed. The present site of the Boda thana is Canarykatta, a position highly inconvenient for a due protection of the whole jurisdiction. The simple removal of the thana to a more centrical situation would contribute much to the improvement of the police in this jurisdiction.

to the inefficiency of the control possessed by the darogah over the remote parts of his jurisdiction.

87. The jurisdiction of Dhap, which includes the Magistrate's residence, the jail, &c., is also of an inconvenient size. This jurisdiction has the peculiarity of completely insulating thana Rungpore, which also has a mofussil jurisdiction. The Rungpore darogah is stationed in the principal town, Mahigunge or Rungpore, and the Dhap cutcherry is within a stone's throw of the Magistrate's court-house, the distance of the one thana from the other being about two koss. The area of these two thanas might be divided to greater advantage by giving the Rungpore darogah the whole of the western portion; but on consideration of the vicinity of the Magistrate, I am not of opinion that this alteration is essential to the efficiency of the police.

88. When I first arrived in the district, I found the thana of Koonwargunge jurisdiction situated full half a mile within the Dinagepore boundary. This disposition was so obviously ridiculous that, with the intent of finally reporting the measure for the approbation of Government, I removed the darogah eastward to Samgunge, a populous mart nearly centrical to his jurisdiction. Under the present arrangement of the thanas, I would beg to recommend this measure to Government for confirmation.

89. The thana of Benakooree, at the north-western extremity of the district, labours under difficulties which it is impracticable to remedy. The intervention of the large insulated position (Fallacotta) which verges on the very site of this thana in the south, and which comprehends a large tract in the very heart of this division, precludes the possibility of the darogah being stationed in a situation centrical to his jurisdiction. When fixed at Sanyasikata (its original site), the thana was interrupted almost immediately on the east by Fallacotta. Now that it is at Benakooree it is immediately interrupted on the south by that possession, and thus Fallacotta would intervene in one quarter or other wherever the thana might be fixed. The present position of the thana is probably upon the whole the most advantageous, as it interrupts an immediate communication which the inhabitants of Fallacotta have with the sâl forest; but the wildness of the country and the relative position of Fallacotta immediately west of Benakooree is such as to secure the communication with the forest in that quarter from interruption. Fallacotta is shaped and situated much as exhibited from memory in the margin.* The crosses represent the outposts which have been stationed round it to interrupt its communication with the Morung on the west and north-west, with the sâl forest on the north and north-east, and with the Bhootan possession on the east.

* Omitted.

90. There are no less than six jemadars and 90 burkundauzes attached to thana Benakooree and Fakirgunge. Of this establishment 4 jemadars and 60 burkundauzes are distributed in parties of ten and fifteen each at five outposts, two to the westward and three to the eastward of Fallacotta. This establishment is enormous, but the state of this extremity was such when Mr. Hartwell, who recommended the augmentation, took charge of the district, that a great increase seems to have been urgently required for the protection of the inhabitants from the ravages of the sardar Mohuntram and his gang, who at that time infested the northern forest, Fallacotta, and the parts of Bhootan and Goorkha territory immediately bordering on Bykuntpore.

91. Whether the comparative tranquillity these thanas have latterly enjoyed has proceeded from a continuance of this large establishment, or from the seizure of Mohuntram, which was effected shortly after the augmentation, it is impossible to determine; but there can be no doubt that the establishing of these outposts has given the inhabitants of the pergunnah a confidence which has been the means of restoring to the Bykuntpore estate a number of ryots who had deserted our provinces in consequence of the frequency of depredation. There can also be no question that the means of prevention of offences were considerably increased by this arrangement; but I am inclined to think that the fears of the robbers have caused them to appreciate these means too highly, for the opportunities afforded to the commission of offences by the local difficulties of the jurisdiction are not readily to be removed by any establishment, however strong and however

thickly planted; and that these outposts have under such circumstances proved of any great practical benefit, must be ascribed rather to a want of judgment on the part of offenders in not discovering that by adapting their plan of attack to the change they might still plunder with but little fear of detection.

92. That these guards are not duly vigilant is but a natural consequence of their remoteness from all superior control, and I fear this is not their only failing, for I heard very general complaints against them when I was at Benakooree for lending money at an exhorbitant rate of interest and recovering these loans by means of duress and other violence; and from what I have observed of their general conduct, I am really afraid that they do but little more than avail themselves of the influence and power their station gives them of oppressing the poorer classes, who, through dread of the consequences of an appeal for redress, seldom dare utter a complaint to superior authority.

93. These posts have always been filled up by up-country burkundauzes, under an idea of their possessing more bravery than the inhabitants of Bengal; but I must question whether this is not upon the whole an improvident arrangement, for the climate of Bykuntpore is very inimical to the constitution of natives of the western provinces,—so much so, that at particular seasons of the year two-thirds of the guards are totally unfit for duty. There is a further objection to the selection being confined to this class, which is that west country burkundauzes who come to Bengal for employment generally have no other object in view than to get rich as fast as they can by lending money on usury—a pernicious practice to which burkundauzes of the Lower Provinces are not generally addicted.

94. The practical advantage would be materially promoted by subjecting them to the frequent personal visitation of the police darogah, who should be held responsible to the Magistrate for their due efficiency; and as the situation of darogah vested with this additional duty would thus become one of considerable responsibility and great personal exertion, and as a certain increase of expense would be incurred in the performance of the above duty, I beg leave to recommend that the salary of the Benakooree darogah be fixed at Rs. 65 a month, and of the Fakirgunge darogah at Rs. 50. The additional expense thus incurred might readily and without the least inconvenience be defrayed by a proportionate reduction in the above or any other thanas. Under the present state of things extraordinary merit meets with punishment instead of reward, for the Magistrate always selects the most active and intelligent of his police officers to fill the above thanas, which, as long as the emoluments attached to them do not exceed those of thanas of less difficulty, and in more healthy situations, cannot fail to be more shunned than sought after.

The first has four, the second but one outpost.

95. The police of the north-western thanas, Benakooree, Fakirgunge, and Boda, has ever been in a very inefficient state; but I think it will be found that they are to the full in as good order as under the peculiar difficulties of their situation they can reasonably be expected to be. The exposure to which Benakooree is subjected has been shown above. Thana Fakirgunge, which is situated on the eastern bank of the Teesta, has the jurisdiction of the tract east of that river, which has been described in the 12th paragraph as being much confounded with the Bhootan possessions since the cession of Julpesh, &c. Its northern limits are bounded by the eastern portion of the disputed sâl forest, alluded to in 6th paragraph; on the west it almost verges upon Fallacotta; and on the south-east it is exposed to Cooch Behar. Thana Boda is exposed to incursion from Fallacotta on the north, Morung and Purneah on the west, Bhootan and Cooch Behar on the east, and a very troublesome part of Dinagepore on the south. The Morung, Lower Bhootan, and Cooch Behar, afford a ready asylum to every description of offender who may have become liable to the penalties of our law; and the borders of the two former estates, as Government has been already informed by the Superintendent of Police, are infested by colonies of a wandering class of people called Keechucks or Geedurwars, who are robbers from their very birth, and who are never to rob without having recourse to murder.

96. The authority granted the Magistrate in January 1814, of pursuing public offenders beyond the borders, has already been attended with the best

effects in this quarter, and if the system be continued I have no doubt that public offences will within a very short period undergo a considerable check. The Magistrate has in consequence of this authority succeeded in apprehending numbers of Keechucks in Nizamtara, a small fort across the Mohanada, who have confessed having often robbed within our limits, and from an apprehension of a similar fate, I understand that a large band of these merciless ruffians have left the Bhootan border. If a perseverance in this system eventually succeed in ridding the borders of these sanguinary robbers, an incalculable blessing will have been gained to the inhabitants of the north-western thanas.

No. 31.

MR. SISSON'S REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE RYOTS.

Dated Bencoolen, the 2nd April 1815.

From—T. Sisson, Esq., late Judge and Magistrate of Rungpore,

To—W. B. Bayley, Esq., Acting Secy. to Govt., Judicial Department.

I have despatched per *Phœnix* that portion of my report on Rungpore which relates to the state of the police. The result of my inquiries regarding the Garo tribes was submitted to Government previously to my departure from Calcutta, and it only remains for me to represent the relative state of the landlord and tenant, which will be the subject of the present address.

2. What I shall have occasion to bring to notice may possibly prove that in Rungpore it is not the prevalence of gang robbery and other public crimes which calls the most loudly for a remedy. These are but the ramifications of an evil whose root has long flourished in secret. The arbitrary oppression under which the cultivator of the soil groans has at length attained a height so alarming as to have become by far the most extensively injurious of all the evils under which that district labours, and until, by a steady adherence to the most decisive and vigorous measures, the bulk of the community shall have been restored from their present state of abject wretchedness to the full enjoyment of their legitimate rights, I fear it will be in vain to expect solid and substantial improvement.

3. In my letter from Dinagepore to the address of Mr. Secretary Dowdeswell, under date the 14th July last, I dwelt at some length upon the very general perversion which the landholders and farmers of this district and of Dinagepore made of the law of distress and sale to the furtherance of every species of rapacity and extortion; and I took the liberty at the same time to suggest such improvement as seemed to promise a mitigation of the oppressiveness of a law which, though a necessary evil, must under any restriction ever continue to be a cruelly powerful engine in the hands of vindictiveness and rapacity of crushing the poor and the abject.

4. In the course of the present address I shall endeavour to show to what a height rapacity, seconded by this and other instruments, has attained in the district of Rungpore. This enumeration will exhibit the state of the ryot far, very far, more wretched than any one perusing in his closet the salutary rules of 1793 and 1794, and the many legislative enactments which preceded them, could conceive it possible for it to have become under a systematic administration of those laws.

5. It will require little more than a recapitulation of the law itself to prove that till within the last three years this evil, so far from being assisted, has ever been discouraged—nay, under pain of severe penalties, absolutely prohibited by the legislature.

That from the earliest times within the reach of public records the cultivator of the soil has possessed certain rights which were publicly recognized by the British Government in the infancy of its establishment, and which were clearly

ascertained and defined by specific legislative enactment full nineteen years before the decennial settlement.

That these rights, after undergoing a modification which involved considerable prejudice* to the interests of the various cultivators of the soil, were finally guaranteed to him on one and the same day that the right of property in the soil he tilled was gratuitously conferred on the zemindar.

* To wit, the annual tax imposed upon him and his posterity to the end of time, of the various cesses levied in contradiction to the written law between the 18th May 1772 and the period at which the settlement of the ryots' tenure might be concluded under the provisions of 1793.

That though probably with but little reference to the probability of its ever being necessary to exert that power, lest peradventure these vitally important rights should, in the result, prove incapable of being secured to the poorer classes, by means of the laws by which they were thus solemnly conferred, the legislature has providently reserved to itself, in the clearest and most unequivocal manner (that is, by the express letter of the very law which has conferred on the zemindar the novel rights he now enjoys), the full and unqualified power of passing such laws in favour of the cultivator as from time to time may appear necessary.

That this authority, from a cause possibly other than that stated in the preamble of the Regulation,† was the following year exerted, and the rights of the ryot, as they had been established in the preceding year, were by an express enactment declared to be guaranteed to him for ever.

† From obvious circumstances it would appear that in point of fact the provisions of Regulation IV of 1794 were enacted rather to correct an inconsistency in the Code of 1793 than to explain a law hitherto misunderstood. I am of opinion that the limiting of ryots' leases in common with all others to the term of ten years by Regulation XLIV of 1793 has been the principal cause of the almost utter extinction in practice of the right of the cultivator to unlimited possession. Had the framers of Regulation IV of 1794 openly corrected this mistake in contradiction to the provisions of Regulation VIII of 1793, instead of adding to the confusion by confirming the intricate and inexplicable system of a decennial renewal of rights which admitted not of alteration, the promulgation of Section 3, Regulation V of 1812, would not have been followed by the injurious consequences it has produced.

5. That thus the faith of the State is to the full as solemnly pledged to uphold the cultivator of the soil in the unmolested enjoyment of his long established rights as it is to maintain the zemindar in the possession of his estate, or to abstain from increasing the public revenue permanently assessed thereon.

6. The instructions issued to the supervisors on the 16th August 1769 contain the first public recognition on the part of the British Government of the rights of the cultivator. These orders excite much interest from the very infancy of our establishment, which renders it the more distressing that the difficulties proceeding from the novelty of the subject should have eventually rendered the deputation of supervisors into the interior of the country of but trifling general benefit. Such was certainly the result with regard to Rungpore, the local circumstances of which district seem to have long kept its internal state concealed from the knowledge of Government.

7. In these instructions it is observed "another grievance, which is equal to the former, is the variety of demands which the collector, from the aumil and zemindar to the lowest pyke, imposes without any colour or license from the Government, some of which have been so long exacted and paid that the ryots begin to imagine the oppression is sanctioned by Government, and is not the mere fraud of the collectors; a third, and equally important object of your attention under this head, is to fix the amount of what the zemindar receives from the ryot as his income or emolument, wherein they generally exceed the bounds of moderation, taking advantage of the personal attachment of their people and the inefficiency of the present restrictions upon them, since the presence of the aumil more frequently produces a scene of confusion than a wariness of conduct. When the sum of the produce of the lands and of such demand on the tenant is thus ascertained with certainty, the proportion of what remains to him, for the support of his family and encouragement of his industry, will clearly appear and lead us to the reality of his condition.

"Among the chief effects which are hoped for from your residence in that province, and ought to employ your thoughts and never to wander from your attention are these:—To convince the ryot that you will stand between him and the hand of oppression; that you will be his refuge and the redresser of his wrongs; that the calamities he has already suffered have sprung from an intermediate cause, and were neither known nor permitted by us; that honest and direct applications to you will never fail in producing speedy and equitable decisions; that after

supplying the legal dues of Government, he may be secure in the enjoyment of the remainder; and finally, to impress him with a veneration and affection for the humane intentions of our Government.

"In the ryot being eased and secured from all burthens and demands but what are imposed by the legal authority of Government itself, and future pottahs being granted him specifying that demand, he should be taught that he is to regard the same as a sacred inviolable pledge; that he is liable to no demands beyond their amount. There can, therefore, be no pretence for suits on that account; no room for the invention of rapacity to practise its usual acts: all will be fair, open, and regular. Every man will know what he can call and defend as his own; and the spirit of lawless encroachment, subsiding for want of a field for exercise, will be changed into a spirit of industry and content, and security will take the place of continued alarms and vexations.

"The ryot, too, should be impressed in the most forcible and convincing manner that the tendency of your measures is to his ease and relief; that every opposition to them is rivetting his own chains and confirming his servitude and dependence on his oppressors; that our object is not increase of rents or the accumulation of demands, but solely by fixing such as are legal and explaining and abolishing such as are fraudulent and unauthorized, not only to redress his present grievances, but to secure him from all further invasions of his property.

"The truth cannot be doubted that the poor and industrious tenant is teased by his zemindar or collector for every extravagance that avarice, ambition, pride, vanity, or intemperance may lead him into over and above what is generally deemed the established rent of his lands. If he is to be married, a child born, honours conferred, luxury indulged, and nuzzuranas or fines exacted, even for his own misconduct, all must be paid by the ryot;* and what heightens the distressful scene, the more opulent, who can better obtain redress for imposition, escape, while the weaker are obliged to submit.

* It is notorious that in Rungpore all fines to which the misconduct of a zemindar may subject him are levied from the ryots of his estate.

"To obtain an account of these cesses or imposts there cannot be a more certain method than what I have before recommended, of getting from the ryot himself a statement of what he actually pays over and above his established rents, and from this you are to draw a medium amount of the cesses levied upon the whole. This should be set against the amount of the established rents so cessed.

"Your commission entrusts you with the superintendence and charge of a province whose rise or fall must considerably affect the public welfare of the whole. The exploring and eradicating of numberless oppressions, which are as grievous to the poor as they are injurious to the Government; the displaying of the national principles of honour, faith, rectitude, and humanity which should ever characterize the name of an Englishman; the impressing of the lowest individual with these ideas, and raising the heart of the ryot from oppression and despondency to security and joy, are the valuable benefits which must result to our nation from a prudent and wise behaviour on your part."

8. The first Regulation which treats of the tenures of the country appears to have been passed on the 14th May 1772. Its 10th article provides "that the farmer shall not receive larger rents from the ryots than the stipulated amount of pottahs on any pretence whatsoever; and that for every instance of such extortion, the farmer, on conviction, shall be compelled to pay back the sum which he may have so taken from the ryot, besides the penalty, equal to the same amount, to the sirkar, and for a repetition or a notorious instance of this oppression on his ryots the farmer's lease shall be annulled."

Article 12th.—"No mahatoots or assessments under the heads of mangun, bawreegundee, sood, or any other abwab or tax shall be imposed upon the ryots; and those articles of abwab which are of late establishment shall be carefully scrutinized, and at the discretion of the committee abolished if they are found in their nature to be oppressive and pernicious."

9. The 35th article of the general Regulations passed on the 8th of June 1787 provides "that the Collector do give the most unremitting attention to ascertain the rules and rates of assessment on the ryots under his jurisdiction, and endeavour to fix upon some mode by which they may be regulated on general, fair, and well ascertained principles."

Article 50.—"Whereas, notwithstanding the orders of Government in the year 1772, prohibiting the imposition of mahatoot or assessment, under the names mangun, hauldaree, marocha, bazeejumma or sood, or any other new article of taxation, various taxes have been since imposed, the Collector is strictly enjoined to enforce this article and prevent the imposition of any new taxes upon the ryots; and if hereafter any new taxes should be imposed, the Collector, on proof of such exaction, is to decree double the amount thereof to the party injured as costs of suit."

10. The decennial settlement was avowedly founded on the principle which had been the basis of the periodical settlements preceding it, viz., as stated in the preamble to Regulation II of 1793, on "an estimate formed by the public officers of the aggregate of the rents payable by the ryots or tenants for each beegha of land in cultivation, of which, after deducting the expense of collection, ten-elevenths were usually considered as the right of the public and the remainder the share of the landholder."

11. It differed from settlements which preceded it in but three points: *first*, in its being fixed for ever; *secondly*, in its formally vesting the property of the soil, under certain restrictions, in the zemindar, till then a mere ministerial officer under Government; and lastly, in its giving up to the zemindar the whole of the profit which was certain to accrue from a progressive extension of cultivation for generations to come. The additional profits which were to accrue to the zemindar from the permanent settlement of his estate were confined to but one source, *i.e.* extension of cultivation. He was vested with no power to enhance the rents of his tenants, with reference even to the waste lands which his exertions might bring into cultivation; he was peremptorily restricted from exacting a higher rent than that which lands of a similar quality might be rated at in the nirickbundee of his estate. The profit that was to arise to him from bringing the waste lands into cultivation was the enjoyment of the Government's share of their produce in addition to his own.

12. The expected result of the decennial settlement was that "individuals would thereby be certain to enjoy the fruits of their industry, that it would dispense prosperity and happiness to the great body of the people and increase the power of the State, which must be proportionate to the collective wealth that by good government it might enable its subjects to acquire."

13. Two hundred families were not to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the rights of a million of under-tenants, but were told that "to conduct themselves with good faith and moderation towards their dependent talookdars and ryots are duties at all times indispensably required from the proprietors of the land, and that a strict observance of these duties is now more than ever incumbent upon them in return for the benefits which they themselves derive from the orders now issued. The Governor-General in Council therefore expects that the proprietors of land will not only act in this manner themselves towards their dependent talookdars and ryots, but also enjoin the strictest adherence to the same principles on the persons whom they may depute to collect the rents from them.

There were but 202 zemindar families in Rungpore.
1793, Regulation I.

"To prevent any misconstruction of the foregoing articles, the Governor-General in Council thinks it necessary to make the following declarations to the zemindars, independent talookdars, and the other actual proprietors of land:—

"*First*, it being the duty of the ruling power to protect all classes of people, and more particularly those who, from situation, are the most helpless, the Governor-General in Council will, whenever he may deem it proper, enact such Regulations as he may think necessary for the protection and welfare of the dependent talookdars, ryots,* and other cultivators of the soil; and no zemindar, independent talookdar, or other actual proprietor, shall be entitled on this account to make any objection to the discharge of the fixed assessment which they have respectively agreed to pay."

* The orders of the Hon'ble Court of Directors on the subject of this declaration are very remarkable:—"And you will in a particular manner be cautious so to express yourselves as to leave no ambiguity as to our right to interfere, from time to time, as it may be necessary for the protection of the ryot and subordinate landholders, it being our intention in the whole of this measure effectually to limit our own demand, but not to depart from our inherent rights, as sovereigns, of being the guardians and protectors of every class of persons living under our Government."—General letter of 19th September 1792.

"Every engagement contracted with under-farmers shall be specific as to the amount and conditions of it, and all sums received by any actual proprietor of land or any farmer of land of whatever description, over and above what is specified in the engagements of the persons paying the same, shall be considered as exacted, and be repaid with a penalty of double the amount."

1793, Regulation VII, section 52.

"The impositions upon the ryots, under the denominations of abwab, mahatoot, and other appellations, from their nature and uncertainty, having become intricate to adjust, and a source of oppression to the ryots, all proprietors of land and dependent talookdars shall revise the same, in concert with the ryots, and consolidate the whole with the assessments into one specific sum."

1793, Regulation VIII, section 54.

"No actual proprietor of land or dependent talookdar, or farmer of land of whatever description, shall impose any new abwab or mahatoot upon the ryots, under any pretence whatever. Every exaction of this nature shall be punished by a penalty equal to three times the amount imposed; and if at any future period it be discovered that new abwabs or mahatoots have been imposed, the person imposing the same shall be liable to this penalty for the entire period of such impositions."*

1793, Regulation VIII, section 55.

* I fear but few of the Rungpore landlords would escape utter ruin if this provision were rigorously enforced in Rungpore.

"No actual proprietor of land or persons acting under their authority shall cancel the pottahs of the khoodkhust ryots† except upon proof that they have been obtained by collusion, or that the rents paid by them within the last three years have been reduced below the nirickbundee of the pergunnahs, or that they have obtained collusive deductions, or upon general measurement of the pergunnah for the purpose of equalizing and correcting the assessment."

1793, Regulation VIII, section 60.

† It is imagined by many that this clause restricts the operation of the above clauses of section 7, Regulation IV of 1794, to khoodkhust, or, as they are sometimes called, chapperbund ryots; but this construction is clearly erroneous, the manifest intent being to exempt the khoodkhust ryots under certain circumstances from the operations of the above rules. All ryots, pykhust as well as khoodkhust, were held equally entitled to the benefit of a fixed nirickbundee, though pykhust ryots would not generally benefit by the privilege, since they would obtain, as an encouragement to till, in a strange village better terms than the rate which the khoodkhust tenant would pay for land of the same quality.

"After the expiration of the year 1198 no engagements for rent contrary to those ordered are to be held valid, and in the event of any claims being preferred by proprietors of estates, or talookdars, farmers or ryots, on engagements wherein the consolidation of the usual abwab, &c., shall not appear to have been made, they are to be non-suited with costs."

1793, Regulation VIII, section 61.

"The rules in the preceding section are to be considered applicable not only to the pottah which the ryots are entitled to demand in the first instance under Regulation VIII of 1793, but also to the renewal of pottahs which may expire or become cancelled under Regulation XLIV of 1793; and to remove all doubt regarding the rates at which the ryots shall be entitled to have such pottahs renewed, it is declared that no proprietor or farmer of land, or any other person, shall require ryots whose pottahs may expire or become cancelled under the last-mentioned Regulation to take out new pottahs at higher rates than the established rates of the pergunnah for lands of the same quality and description, but that the ryots shall be entitled to have such pottahs renewed at the established rates upon making application for that purpose to the person by whom their pottahs are to be granted, in the same manner as they were entitled to demand pottahs in the first instance by Regulation VIII of 1793."

1794, Regulation IV, section 7.

14. The recorded sentiments of the Court of Directors on the subject of the decennial settlement are well worthy attention:—"It would be doing Mr. Shore an injustice not to acknowledge that as his opinions in general against such a settlement are advanced with ability, so there are several of his objections which are very serious in themselves, and have considerably impressed our minds. These are drawn from the still imperfect knowledge of our Government respecting the real resources of the provinces, as well as of the respective rights of the zemindars,

talookdars, and ryots from its inability to discriminate what part of the taxes levied from the two latter classes by the zemindars ought to be sanctioned by Government in a permanent settlement, from the uncertainty of accomplishing that settlement with a due regard to the rules prescribed for it, and especially from the extreme difficulty of forming and executing such regulations as shall reserve to the great body of the ryots the same equity and certainty as to the amount of their rents, and the same undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their industry, which we mean to give to zemindars themselves. Upon these grounds it is contended that as some districts of the country will probably be overrated and others suffer from drought and inundations, the proprietors unable to make good their assessments will, without anything blameable on their part, be deprived of their lands by judicial sale; that the Company will from such cases as this be exposed to a continual diminution of the stipulated revenue without a possibility of any augmentation to balance their loss; and that after all, unless we succeed in introducing and establishing equitable regulations between the landlords and their tenants, the great object for which such sacrifices and a permanent settlement will have been made—that is, the improvement and happiness of the country—will be unattained, and therefore the evils of the old system still subsist.

"There remains but one subject to mention in this letter. That, however, is a subject of the last importance, which is, the watching over, rearing, and maturing this system, and maintaining, under future administrations, the energy which has commenced it. All the benefits hoped for from it to the country and to the Company—all its success—must depend upon the vigilance and fostering care of our Government and our servants; no mistake could be more fatal than that of supposing that it may be left to its own execution, and that all the effects it is indeed fitted to produce will necessarily and of course flow from it. If any conclusion is to be drawn from the descriptions given of the people, it is surely that the powerful are oppressive and the weak fraudulent. Having neither wisdom nor confidence to act for distant good, and being unrestrained by moral considerations, they are prone to avail themselves of present opportunity. It is true that the new system reckons upon their self interest, and this is an excellence in it; but it will take time to assure them the system is solid, and to discover to them that their interest is best promoted by following the dictates of justice and humanity. The business of our Government must be to prevent them from violating those principles, injuring each other, and obstructing the gradual development of the effects which the new institution is calculated to produce. When the effects are become obvious, and the people are taught by sensible demonstration, the system will then, as we have already suggested, be better able to stand by itself. In the meantime it must be the duty of our servants to watch incessantly over its progress; to see that the landholders observe punctually their agreements with Government and with the ryots, that they neither pass invented claims on the eve of a permanent settlement, nor fraudulently shift the burthen of revenue by collusive transfers, nor by any other sinister practices diminish the payment of their stipulated assessment; that they likewise uniformly give to their ryots written specific agreements, as also receipts for all payments, and that these agreements be on the one side and the other fairly fulfilled. In this way, and in this only, can the system be expected to flourish. But it is not enough that complaints are redressed when they reach the seat of authority; many injuries in the remoter parts of the districts may thus be committed with impunity. It will be the Collector's duty to inspect every part of the province entrusted to him, to see to the state of cultivation, to inquire into the condition of the ryots, and thus afford opportunity for representation, and check the propensity to abuse."—*Vide* General letter of 19th September 1792.

15. I have observed in a preceding note that the confusion as to the law of ryot tenure introduced by the provisions of Regulation XLIV of 1793 had created considerable doubt in the minds of many as to the extent of the rights of the cultivators of the soil. The vague language used in the abrogation of certain parts of Regulation IV of 1794 by section 3 of Regulation V of 1812 may possibly appear but ill-calculated to dispel those doubts; that it has had a contrary effect in the instance of many I can maintain without fear of contradiction.

16. I am aware that the intent of the section last quoted is to promote the cause which it appears to me to have prejudiced; but though I may be willing to allow that the express letter, if carefully considered, will be found not to take

away any rights which the ryot possessed previously to its enactment, yet I cannot help continuing steadfast in the opinion that the opposite interpretation given it by the natives is precisely what, on comparing its contents with the provisions of Regulation XLIV of 1793 and section 7 of Regulation IV of 1794, they might have been expected to form.

17. It had been enacted by section 2 of Regulation XLIV of 1793 that no lease whatever, except for the erection of houses and for gardens, could be made for a longer period than ten years. This rule had been modified in favour of the ryot the following year, but not by exempting him from operation of that Regulation, but by entitling him to a renewal of his lease after the expiration of the period which had been limited by the rule above cited. Regulation V of 1812 annuls the provisions of Regulation XLIV of 1793, and provides that the renewal of pottahs, as prescribed by Regulation IV of 1794, is no longer necessary, and that the landlord and tenant are at liberty to come to such agreement as may mutually appear to them conducive to their respective interests.

18. It will be allowed that the illiterate ryot could never under the old rules have felt his right to perpetual possession confirmed by a deed which expressly limited his lease to ten years. On the contrary, it is well known to those who have been at the pains to inquire into the opinions of the lower orders that the ryots in general have always felt a solicitude to avoid the taking such pottahs, under the impression that they would thereby be compromising their right to unlimited occupancy.

They see nothing of the law but what to all appearance militates against* the existence of such a right, and therefore they can have no opportunity of reconciling the circumstance of limitation with the preservation of it. Let them go to their mundul or pramanick; he is equally ignorant with themselves, or if he has casually heard vague mention of the favourable clause, being in nine instances out of ten bribed to the interest of the zemindar, it is not likely that he will be communicative. Let them go to their putwarri; he is in the regular pay of the zemindar and is removable from office at his pleasure, from him therefore they will collect nothing favourable. Let them go the moonsif; here they not unfrequently find as much ignorance as before, and always as much collusion in favour of the opposite party.

* The pottah drawn out agreeably to Regulation XLIV of 1793.

19. Under these circumstances, it may easily be imagined that a ryot whose lease, granted in pursuance of Regulation XLIV of 1793, for a period of ten years, had expired in 1803, considering his right to unlimited occupancy to have been destroyed, by his having taken a pottah for a limited period, would feel himself at the end of that period altogether dependent upon the caprice of his landlord for a renewal of his lease upon any terms. This I know to have been a very general effect of the limitation noticed. Is it to be wondered at that the zemindar should convert this ignorance on the part of the ryot into a means of self emolument? After the expiration of the period of the decennial pottah, where such pottahs have been granted, the zemindar has, if he found the condition of the land admitted it, very generally enhanced the rate of the former lease, and given the new pottah for a much shorter term than ten years. If this practice prevailed before 1812, would not the landlord readily find wherewithal to support his rapacity by the semblance of law in the provisions of the fifth Regulation of that year?

20. With a view to perspicuous illustration I shall beg to suppose a case:—

A is a ryot, who has been on B's estate from the year 1790. In conformity to the provisions of the decennial settlement, B, in the year 1793, adjusts the rates of the estate which A cultivates, and establishes a form of pottah agreeably to which A obtains a lease from B for a period of ten years (that is till the expiration of the year 1803) at the rent of Rs. 30 per annum. In 1804 A finds his lease expired and goes to B for a renewal. B says,—"No; the value of land has increased, you must therefore give me forty rupees a year, or I will give the land to another tenant. It is also my intention to limit my leases in future to five years." A sees no alternative but compliance, and reluctantly agrees to the terms. In 1808 the same scene is acted over again, and if the condition of the land and other circumstances admit of it, a further enhancement takes place. A reluctantly complies, and now pays Rs. 45. In 1813 the third lease being expired, A solicits a renewal. "No," says B, "times are altered; the law now allows us to make whatever bargains with our ryots we may find most conducive

to our interests. Your lease was but for five years, which have expired, and with it your occupancy has ceased. I have had an offer of sixty rupees for your land, and unless you consent to this enhancement you must give place to C."

21. Will any one maintain that a case can never have happened as above assumed? Will any one maintain that the solitary circumstance of a fraction of a section not having been repeated (a section of which the ryot never heard) precludes the possibility of its ever happening? Would that those that think so were right, and that I and those who think with me were wrong. I have no object in complaining without grounds; my sole view is to further the cause of the oppressed.

22. Government may possibly imagine that my apprehensions are not without foundation when I inform them that at this very moment the zemindars of Rungpore are perverting the provisions of section 3, Regulation V of 1812, to the entailment in perpetuity upon their wretched victims (the peasantry) of the long series of exactions of which the following are but a few specimens.

23. Raj Chunder Chowdry, proprietor of the four-anna portion of pergunnah Coonry, who pays Rs. 15,976 to Government, purchased in the year 1812, of Messrs. Colvins, Bazett and Co., a lower-roomed pucka house situate nearly opposite to the European burial ground at Rungpore, formerly the property of one Nichols, a shopkeeper, for the sum of Rs. 21,000; he likewise held a *deba poonja* to render his entry on the premises duly auspicious, which cost him Rs. 2,000 more. It is a notorious fact that Raj Chunder Chowdry has collected from the ryots of his estate, with a view to defray this expense, no less a sum than Rs. 11,000 under the bold item of *dalan khurcha* (house or hall money).

24. The ceremonies attending the birth of this zemindar's grandson cost him Rs. 1,200, and he has collected from his ryots on this account Rs. 5,000.

25. Sudasheb Rai, a joint proprietor of the seven-anna portion of the same estate, had his house burnt down a little more than ten years ago, on which occasion he is said to have lost a considerable quantity of property. This zemindar is notoriously known to have fully indemnified himself for this loss by collections from his ryots, and the temporary addition thus imposed on the rent-roll of his estates is said to have outlived the cause which gave it birth, and to have become a permanent increase upon the former rent, under the title of *ghur banaee* (house building).

26. Sudasheb Rai commemorated the Mahabharat some years ago, which ceremony lasted three months, and in which Rs. 20,000 were expended. The whole brunt of this vast expense fell upon the tenantry of his estate.

27. Joyram Baboo, a man whose boundless extravagance has reduced him to a very low ebb, farms the whole of his estates, which, though much of his property has gone to the hammer, are still of great extent. This man, though, as above stated, his lands are all in farm, has for many years been in the annual practice of visiting his villages in the cold season. On these occasions he proceeds in great pomp, travelling with a set of double-poled tents, and several elephants and led horses following in his train.

28. It may be imagined that this annual visit is with a view to alleviate misery, and to extend the hand of charity to the distressed among his tenantry. Far different is his object. He proceeds from village to village, levying contributions as he goes, under the names of *mangun* and *bhukka*, which in name only are voluntary, for all must give their quota or look to the consequences of a refusal. I am unprepared to state the probable amount of the annual collections thus made; the very mode in which they are levied bids defiance to all inquiry on the subject. Suffice it to say that these collections are yearly made, and the worthy landlord has probably but just returned from his annual rambles.*

* Lest it be thought that this practice is confined to one instance, I beg to observe that this is the most general of all the modes of illegal exactions practised in Rungpore. It has even on one occasion been recognised by the Collector of the district.
Vide Appendix A.

29. Moonshi Himayutoollah, once sheristadar of the Judge's Court, and late Dewan of the Collectorship, bought a very large estate in the Dinagepore district† a few years ago, and so happy was his bargain that he is said to have levied, in the course of his first visit of ceremony to his new tenants, a full moiety of the purchase-money. This he is said to have managed with such address as to have left the contributors mightily pleased with the moderation and forbearance of their new lord and master.

† This forms part of the tract separated from Rungpore on the adjustment of the boundary in 1798. Mr. Hatch's settlement did not extend to this estate.

30. Himayutoollah had occasion to buy an elephant a year or two ago, which cost him Rs. 500 or Rs. 600. This was a mere fleabite to his tenants, whom he found it no difficult matter to persuade that it was as essential to their respectability as to his own that he should no longer mount the back of so mean a quadruped as a horse.

31. Raee Daniobund Niteeanund, who has very extensive estates in Rungpore, Dinagepore, and Moorshedabad, and who pays an annual revenue to Government for his estates in Rungpore alone of Rs. 69,742, yearly levies in the most open and barefaced manner a cess of an anna per rupee from the whole of his tenantry for the avowed purpose of defraying the daily expense of the offerings to his household god Bunwaree; and I am given to understand he quiets his conscience by the reflection that he is not guilty of malversation, not even the vast sums thus levied being, as he maintains, adequate to the expense incurred on account of his favourite idol.

32. A man named Bhyrub, commonly called Bhyrub Baboo, about three years ago, farmed the extensive pergunnah of Dimla, comprising the extent of a whole thana jurisdiction, and with the view to increase the revenues of the pergunnah carried into the mofussil at the first outset above a thousand rupees worth of broadcloth, coarse and superfine, with which, assisted by the proffer of more substantial personal immunities, he bribed the pramanicks of the several talooks over to his interest, who without remorse consigned their inferiors to exaction and plunder.*

* The pramanicks and munduls are by far the most villainous of all concerned in these oppressions; for the ryots are presumed to elect these officers out of their own body, for no purpose than to have one to act, as circumstances may require, as their protector. They often defray out of the common purse the expenses of this man, who is all along playing a double game and actively employed in subverting at the moment he is thought to be protecting the rights of his electors.

33. The above are but a few of the many practical proofs which might be adduced in support of what I have advanced relative to the state of the ryot in Rungpore. Every *Doorgah*, every *Kartick*, every *Kali* poojah, is paid for by the ryots, who, in Rungpore, to add to the cruelty of the oppression and to the insult, are full three-fourths of them Mussulmans. Not a child can be born, not a head religiously shaved, not a son married, not a daughter given in marriage, not even one of the tyrannical fraternity dies, without an immediate visitation of calamity upon the ryot. Whether the occasion be joyful, whether it be sad, in its effects to the cultivator it is alike mournful and calamitous. Surely it will be sufficient to have stated these facts. I feel that I should only be weakening the cause by dispassionately discussing the probable effects of the continuance of so woful a system of remorseless tyranny.

34. It may be asked how these oppressions are reconcilable to the provisions of the legislature. For an explanation of the mode pursued with the refractory, I beg to refer to my letter of the 14th of July last, on the subject of distress and sale. To conclude that the penalties of the law are sufficient to restrain one removed by a distance of possibly seventy coss† from the eye of the Judge, who is left to the unshackled control of the whole internal economy of his estate, and who is immediately supported in his oppressions by the irresistible phalanx of police darogah, moonsif, putwari, and pramanick, a distress and sale law, and a long purse, is, I fear, taking too favourable a view of the subject. For my own part, under the general inefficiency of the system, it seems to me clearly to be the interest of the tenant to bear with the oppressions of his landlord as long as they may leave him wherewithal to drag on a comfortless and miserable existence; and when they shall exceed this pitch, tacitly to bear with the hardness of his fate, and seek for a temporary mitigation of his suffering under a new master.‡

† The site of the Rungamuttee thana, Goalpara, is this distance from Rungpore.

‡ The putwarees, who, as may naturally be expected from the mode of their appointment, are mere instruments in the hands of the zemindar, will never give a receipt for any sums of illegal cess which they or their employers may have levied, so that documentary proof of such exactions is effectually evaded, and the ryot invariably fails in establishing it before the court. A double set of accounts is at the same time kept by every putwaree, and a fabricated rental, from which all entry of illegal cesses is carefully excluded, is produced to the Judge in proof of the falsehood of any complaint of exaction.

35. I will not deny that the ryots are in their turn often guilty of fraud; but fraud is a defence with which weakness will always endeavour to shelter itself against oppression, and with removal of the cause the effect will also cease.

At present it cannot be disputed that the Rungpore ryots, many of them, have more land than what stands against them in the village register, and that it is a short-sighted anxiety to conceal this in order to avoid a permanent increase of their legal rental, which gives the zemindar so ample a field for the exercise of arbitrary exaction. The cultivator submits to a temporary exaction, however heavy, in preference to exposing the extent of his cultivation, whereby he would furnish the zemindar with an ascertained basis on which to found a permanent increase of exaction. The intermediate agents of the zemindar greedily avail themselves of this feeling to enrich themselves at the expense of their employer; and the ryot, after a vain struggle against tyranny, in the result finds himself far more impoverished than if he had patiently given himself up a victim to the caprice of a single oppressor. Thus the present system of exaction is in reality as adverse to the true interests of the landlord as it is destructive to the rights of the tenant, and both parties will be equally benefited by its subversion.

36. It is argued by many that the native of Asia requires a stimulus of a peculiar nature to goad him to exertion. In him the order of human nature is reversed, and however great and manifest be the advantages which industry may hold out, such are his indolence and apathy that under no circumstances will he exert himself further than to barely keep himself and family from starving. This sentiment has gained much ground of late, and the arguments it affords its advocates are at the present moment held forth as conclusive against the policy of bettering the condition of the poor. It is seriously maintained that nothing short of State bankruptcy would follow any measures that might be adopted to restrain the landlord from exaction, and that the higher the industry of the tenant be taxed, the more he will exert himself, and by consequence the better will be his condition. Will these theorists venture so far as to contend that improvement thrives best under that state of things by which the labourer tills in utter ignorance of the proportion which rapacity will allow him to reap? But I should hope the happiness or misery of millions does not depend upon mere speculation. Specific and determinate rights have long since been conferred on the peasantry by the most solemn enactments of the legislature; and I trust the question now is not whether these rights are to be upheld or annihilated, but in what manner it may be possible to establish them on a substantial and practical basis.

37. In no district in the provinces will this prove so difficult to effect as in Rungpore, for in none are the poor more abject and in none the rich more tyrannical. In other districts the demands of the State have been always regulated in a great measure by the ascertained resources of the country. In Rungpore these resources have never been ascertained; there the demand of Government has often been increased on the mere conjecture of the country's ability to pay an enhanced revenue; and this has ever been done when a heavy balance of the lighter assessment of the last year has indicated that more had already been imposed than the established system of collection was competent to realize.* During these times repeated orders and proclamations, special as well as general, had from year to year been passed, enjoining the abolition of the abwabs and commanding the universal issue of regular and specific pottahs. Written engagements had also been exacted from the landholders to the same effect,† and all to no purpose, because the utter ignorance of the local authorities as to the resources of the country absolutely prevented their interposing their authority to enforce rates of the operation of which they foresaw not the extent. The performance of these requisitions was in consequence left to the discretion of the party whose obvious interest it was to disregard them; whilst the ignorance and abject state of the tenant afforded the landlord every opportunity to conceal from him the real nature of these orders, and even to persuade him that the change projected was fraught with danger to his direct interest.‡

* Appendix B and C.

† Appendix D and E.

‡ Appendix F will show that the State had unwillingly become a party to the infraction of its own laws.

38. The principle on which the permanent settlement was formed, namely, that in fixing the amount of the assessment the "jumma of the preceding year compared with accounts and information supplied by the Collectors, and the recommendation of the Board founded thereon," should furnish the standard, was obviously calculated to perpetuate the mischief. "Minute examinations or new local

investigations into the actual value of the lands" were discouraged by the Hon'ble Court of Directors; and though in the orders of the 5th of February 1787 the Governor-General in Council informed the Board of Revenue that it was not meant thereby "to preclude local investigations in order to obtain a knowledge of the actual resources of a district where a want of all good information or other circumstances might render it expedient," yet the district of Rungpore, which fell so exactly under this exception, was unfortunately not exempted from the general principle. Thus whilst the settlement of Dinagepore, the state of which district must have been precisely similar to that of Rungpore, was by the zeal, diligence, and abilities of Mr. Hatch, founded on the result of the minutest investigations into the state of the internal resources of every pergunnah, that of Rungpore was established on the uncertain criterion of preceding settlements which had their basis in bare conjecture.*

* Mr. Hatch made a circuit of his district, and thereby ascertained the real state of the country, entered upon the arduous duty of settling what was all confusion with unremitted perseverance, and thus perfected a settlement which will hand down his name in honour to after ages. Mr. Purling yielded to the intricate confusion of the mofussil economy of Rungpore, and thus entailed upon future generations the evils which it is now found so difficult to remedy. The Board finally applauded Mr. Purling's zeal, and recommended his services to the favourable consideration of Government.

39. The necessary consequences of this state of things has been that in Rungpore the rights of the tenantry have always depended upon the will of the zemindars; for when the legal dues recoverable by the proprietor have never been ascertained, it is impossible to detect, much less to prevent, exaction. With regard to the provisions of Regulation VIII of 1793, those rules from their application, having been left entirely to the discretion of the zemindar, cannot but have proved nugatory in a district labouring under the above disadvantages. Accordingly, the rates of pottah established by such of the zemindars as after reiterated injunctions did obey the requisition of the law, were regulated by the mere caprice of the individual; and the endless and arbitrary variety thus introduced but added to the confusion which the plan was intended to remedy. In the Appendix G. I have inserted the correspondence held by the Collector with the Board of Revenue on the subject, and some idea may be formed of the inefficiency of the pottahdari system as pursued in Rungpore from the fact that in less than ten years subsequent to the issue of the pottahs, neither the Collector, the Judge, nor the Registrar, could ascertain whether, in the form of decennial pottahs established by the Collector for general observance, the *abwabs* had been consolidated with the *assul*, or been left a separate item in the engagement.†

† *Vide* Appendix H.

40. It is far easier to describe than to remedy these evils. The only effectual mode of attaining this important end in Rungpore will be, in the first place, to ascertain by a local investigation, to be superintended by a covenanted servant of ability and experience, the several varieties of rate and pottah throughout‡ the district, and the proportion which the illegal cess is made in the several estates to bear to the recorded rental; *secondly*, to ascertain by actual measurement the extent of cultivation in each pergunnah; *thirdly*, to reduce the qualities of land in each pergunnah to a certain number of classes, which may be readily distinguishable one from the other; *fourthly*, to ascertain the average gross produce of each class; and *fifthly*, to determine, reference being had to the present and former rates of rent, what proportion of the average produce shall in each class be retained by the ryot, and what proportion at a fixed money valuation shall be received by the zemindar.§

‡ If I could hope that this step would be sanctioned by Government, my anxiety that the plan might not fall through want of zeal and ability in the execution would impel me to solicit that Mr. Fendall might be selected for this important duty.

§ To provide against any future sensible reduction in the price of silver, a reservation might be made that the present valuation of the crop should be liable, at the discretion of Government, to revisal at the expiration of every tenth or twentieth year, and in order to introduce this reservation so as to avoid giving the ryot suspicion that his lease conferred not a right of perpetual occupancy, the rate of rent ought to be specified in kind in some such manner as this:—"At the yearly rent of two maunds of rice, valued at one sicca rupee." The terms of the reservation should also be expressly mentioned in the pottah, and should be accompanied with the proviso that under no circumstances it should be competent to Government or to the proprietor to raise the rate of the rent beyond the current value of two maunds of rice per beegha. Rice would appear to be the nearest measure of value in the province of Bengal; it should therefore be established as the measure of rent, even of land which might produce other crops. There can be no disputing the fact that in

41. This is the principle on which the admirable settlement of Dinagepore was established by Mr. Hatch. That gentleman made but six distinctions in the quality of land throughout the district. These were (1) *pullee*, first sort; (2) *pullee*, second sort; (3) *kheear*,* first sort; (4) *kheear*, second sort; (5) *bhon* or lands liable to inundation; and (6) lands waste previously to 1196 (B.S.) The rate of each of these sorts varied in different pergunnahs, the waste lands being in every case liable after the third year to the full *pullee* or *kheear* rate according to their quality. In consequence of this methodical arrangement attempts were made by the landlords to enhance the rent of the land of an inferior to the rate of a higher quality, and differences as to the actual extent of a ryot's tillage are to this day the only sources of dispute between landlord and tenant in that part of Dinagepore which was settled by Mr. Hatch.† The pergunnah rate can never be disputed when the quality is once ascertained; and the several qualities, from their being defined by the broadest principles of distinction, such as the capability of the land to bear one or more crops, are readily determinable on judicial investigation.

42.‡ The extent of each cultivator's tillage, and the several qualities of his land, should be noted down as the survey proceeded, and each cultivator should be held entitled to receive a fixed pottah in perpetuity for the full extent of his lands at the establishd rates. The pottahs of every village should be numbered, and the particulars of each pottah be recorded in a numerical register to be kept by the canoongoe of the pergunnah. The land measure should be reduced to one standard throughout the district, and to avoid fraud in the measurement of land, an iron chain, or one made of short bamboo linked together with iron rings, should be adopted for general use instead of rope, which is apt to stretch or shrink according to the season of the year, or of a rod, in the use of which there are various opportunities of fraudulent measurement. The rate of standard should be promulgated for general information, and a counterpart of the established cubit made of bamboo should be furnished to each landholder, which should bear an impression of the court seal at both ends as a mark of its being of the proper standard. The different rates of land should be defined by such distinguishing circumstances as might be readily ascertainable, and the performance of this important duty should be vested exclusively in the Superintendent, who might be directed to adopt the plan pursued by Mr. Hatch as his model.

many parts of the country considerable improvements have been introduced by the proprietors by cutting water-courses and raising embankments; and where, as seldom happens, this may have been done at his own expense, the zemindar ought in justice to enjoy an enhanced rent. But improvements of this kind are unknown in Rungpore, and where they may be made the zemindar might be rewarded by the enhancement of the rent of his land to the rate of the quality to which he may have improved it, a second reservation being inserted in the pottah to the effect that "provided by cutting water-courses or raising embankments the zemindar's exertions raise the capability of the land to that of a higher quality, it shall be competent to the Government to direct a survey of the improvements, and to award payment of the rent of the quality to which the lands may thus have been improved." But care must be taken that the reward is not thus bestowed where it is not deserved. In most cases of such improvement it will be found that they have been made at the expense of the unrewarded labour of the ryots themselves, collected *en masse* for that purpose, and that projection of the improvement constitutes the sole merit of the zemindars.

* The second, fourth, and fifth rates, were introduced into but few mehals. In general there were but two distinctions of quality, viz., *pullee*, or land yielding crops at every harvest, and *kheear*, or land which admitted but of one crop.

† In 1798 a considerable portion of the tract settled by Mr. Hatch was separated from Dinagepore, and annexed to Rungpore and Rajshahye. This change has been fatal to the rights of the cultivators, for since the annexation to Rungpore and Rajshahye Mr. Hatch's rates have been utterly disregarded by the zemindars. In Dinagepore the system of rates is so generally known, that the proprietors left under the jurisdiction of that district have not as yet dared to alter the rates, though they often strive to evade them by disputing the quality of the lands. Incalculable blessings would be conferred on a very numerous population if the Judges of Rajshahye and Rungpore were officially furnished with copies of Mr. Hatch's rates, and of the rules followed in the establishment of them, and if it were published for general information that the rates established by Mr. Hatch are in every instance to be held inviolate throughout the tracts comprehended within the limits of his settlement.

In 1798 many annexations were also made to Dinagepore from Rungpore. In these tracts the state of the ryot is at present precisely what it has been described to be in Rungpore.

‡ The tenures on which land is cultivated in the tracts east of the Suncoosa and Berhampootur are not regulated by the extent of tillage. The rents in that part of the district are levied in some places at so much per plough, in others at so much per house. Illegal cesses even extend to those wilds; but the competition for cultivators generally screens the poor from oppression in situations where land is always abandoned, when a few years of tillage has deprived it of luxuriant fertility. There is here no local attachment to assist the zemindar in his exactions; the ryot abandons his hut with indifference on the slightest provocation, and seeks a more indulgent master.

The measurement should in the first instance be made by ameens to be appointed by the Superintendent, and it should be the duty of the village putwari and mundul to report to the canoongoe all subsequent alterations as they might occur. A table of the rates established in each pergunnah should be hung up in a conspicuous part of the moonsif's cutcherry and in that of the thanadar of the jurisdiction, and they should be regularly recorded both in the Judge's and in the Collector's Office. The canoongoe should be required to furnish the Collector with an attested copy of his register when completed, and to transmit to that officer at the close of every year a list of the mutations that may have taken place during that period.

43. The putwaris should be appointed by the zemindars as heretofore, but to ensure impartiality of conduct in the execution of this responsible office their appointment should require the confirmation of the villagers; neither should these officers be removable without the consent of both parties, except on the ground of misconduct proved to the satisfaction of the moonsif of the pergunnah. A mundul should be appointed to every village in order to superintend the conduct of the putwari on the part of the ryots, and to assist that officer in the collection of the revenues. The mundul should be elected by the majority of the villagers, and be removable at pleasure by the same authority. The office of canoongoe should be re-established, whose duty, as formerly, should be to record every particular relating to the tenures of land and the state of the cultivation. He should likewise be required to keep a register of the leading particulars of every ryot's pottah throughout his jurisdiction. He should superintend the conduct of the several village putwarees and munduls, keep a regular register of those officers, and report all instances of neglect on their part to inform him of any alteration that may take place in their several villages. The canoongoe's records should be regularly entered in strongly bound books of durable paper, each leaf of which should be numbered and authenticated by any officer the Judge may nominate to that duty; in these records all vacancies and interlineations should be prohibited under pain of the severest penalties.

44. To assist the operation of the above, or any other system that may be adopted for the relief of the ryot, it will be essential to add as much as possible to the respectability and efficiency of the mofussil Commissioners. With this view I would earnestly beg leave to recommend that none be eligible to these situations but such as may have established a character for respectability, ability, and erudition in the public seminaries, the studies of which institutions might be regulated so as to render the students eminently qualified for judicial situations; that all vacancies in the office of Sudder Ameen, Moonsif, Native Commissioner, and Cazee, be henceforward supplied exclusively from the list of those who may be reported duly qualified by a Committee of examiners, and that the appointment of these officers, on the report of the examiners, be vested in the Governor-General in Council; that all persons now holding these appointments, of whom vast numbers are from various causes totally unworthy of being continued in office, be subjected to the examination of Committees to be formed for that purpose at the head station of each provincial court, and that all those who may be found disqualified for the office they hold be removed, and their places filled from the public seminaries in the manner above noticed.

BENCOOLEN,
The 2nd April 1815.

THOS. SISSON,
Late Judge and Magistrate of Rungpore.

APPENDIX A.

Extract of a letter from MR. PETER MOORE, *the Collector of the district, to the Grain Committee, under date the* 3rd *December* 1784, *reporting the readiness of the Rungpore zemindars to contribute towards the expense of erecting Golahs.*

NEITHER the zemindars in this or any other part of the country will pay it from any stock of their own, but as usual levy it from the country under the denomination of maugun or want;* and as a measure of finance adopted by the Government, it will then meet a

* Rather begging.

ready and voluntary concurrence.* In well-regulated zemindaries, even when maugun has been privately asked by the zemindars, the ryots understanding it as a necessity of the zemindar's household, or requisition for services beneficial to the zemindary, it has been known to meet a ready and voluntary consent. If such supplies were readily furnished under the Mogul Government, when neither life, liberty, nor property were secure, it ought not to be supposed that under the mildness and security of English protection and laws, when those blessings are sacredly preserved to them, as far as the English arm can reach landholders will be less inclined to lend the same acquiescence.†

* If this be the criterion of zemindary regularity, I fear there is no want of that virtue in Rungpore.

† One might have looked for sentiments other than these from an administrator of the humane law of 1772.

APPENDIX B.

In the Bengal year 1177 Mr. Grose, the Collector, made a complete hustabood of Rungpore from the papers of the preceding year,‡ when it appeared that the resources of the district were as follows :—

‡ Not from measurement.

Assul Jumma	6,22,917	2	14	3
Abwabs, viz.—				
Chout, or quarter of the revenue agreed to be paid to the Mahrattas	1,55,769	0	0	0
Surf sicca or tax to bring the money collected to a full standard	1,16,796	9	0	0
Firary, or tax to make good deficiencies occasioned by desertion	66,765	4	0	0
Morkafee jurib tax agreed to avoid measurement	25,036	15	10	0
Mahtoot palataka, or tax to make good deficiencies occasioned by desertion ...	41,728	4	16	0
§ Derivallah, being tax levied to make up deficiencies	2,08,353	11	9	0
Total ...	12,37,367	14	13	3

Mr. Grose then granted the following deductions :—

Talook Abeer Sirdar belonging to Dinagepore	1,008	7	12	0
Subsistence to ryots	47,669	14	7	3
Loss by deduction	41,123	4	18	2
Sum twice inserted by mistake	3,382	7	16	3
Suranjamy mofussil	83,610	14	11	0
„ farmer	70,538	5	4	2
Canoongoe's dufter	7,757	0	4	2
Total ...	2,55,090	0	6	15
Remainder ...	9,82,277	7	8	3

§ Derivallah. The ryots rose in 1783 on account of a cess of three annas in the rupee being imposed on them by Doby Singh, of famous memory, under the head of Derivallah, batta, hoondewan, and kurtemy. On this occasion they with weapons in their hands demanded, *firstly*, the abolition of the present derivallah; *secondly*, the re-establishment of the nurrainy currency; *thirdly*, the abolition of kurtemy and hoondeda; *fourthly*, the deduction of the firary tax from the kistbundy, neither did they lay aside their arms before they got all those demands unconditionally granted to them.

Increase of 1778.

Tunkeebeshee, or increase by investigation	30,587	0	0	0
Nuzzraadazy beshee, or arbitrary increase	81,960	0	0	0
Mahtoot foujdary	6,919	8	10	0
Total ...	1,19,466	8	10	0
Jumma for 1178 fixed by Mr. Grose ...	11,01,743	15	18	3
Collected in 1178	9,14,615	0	3	1
Balance never realized ...	1,87,128	15	15	2

APPENDIX C.

ACCOUNT of the settlement of Rungpore previously to the Bengal year 1169 given in on demand of the Collector by the canoongoe of Rungpore.

This account corresponds in the main with that printed at page 62 of my former notes, but while omitting some particulars contained in Mr. McDowall's translation, it gives a much fuller account on the whole. It is probably a new translation by Mr. Sisson from the original document.
E. G. G.

The particulars of the jumma of Rungpore are not amongst the records of this Office; but as far as I have been able to learn the circumstances of the settlement before the accession of the Company, I shall here state them for your information.

In the Bengal year 1147 Cossim Ulee Khan having given a tahood for Rs. 3,36,000 came to this place, and that bundabust was continued without alteration till the end of 1164. In the year 1175* Shekh Abdool Soobha, who was Cossim Ulee Khan's servant, being discontented with his master, went to Moorshedabad and told Meer Cossim that the district was capable of yielding an increase, for which reason Meer Cossim gave a tahood for an increase of one lakh upon the former jumma, and, having appointed Shekh Abdool Soobha his naib, he sent him up to Rungpore, where he died five or six days after his arrival. The Nabob Meer Cossim having received account of the said Shekh's death immediately set out for this place, and after his arrival, having laid an increase upon the whole district, he took from Rampershad a tahood for ten lakhs of rupees, and then returned to Moorshedabad. The revenue was not realized, and therefore Rampershad and his relations were imprisoned in the fort. In 1166 a decrease was granted on the former jumma and Dewan Shamsoondur gave a tahood for the revenue, which continued under his management during the years 1166 and 1167.

* Probably in 1165.

In the year 1168 Dewan Bydnath and Meer Murdun Ulee arrived, and, having laid an increase of a lakh and odd thousand rupees, they again took a tahood for the amount from Dewan Shamsoondur, but from the revenue not being paid up Meer Dour Buksh was appointed Sajawul. This man deprived a great many Hindoos of their caste, and exercised the greatest severities in the collections, but was unable to realize the revenues.

In the end of the year 1168, or the beginning of 1169, in the month of Assar, a Soobadar with near a hundred men came from Monghyr, and having confined the Sajawul Meer Dour Buksh, and the amla, he carried them on board a boat, together with Ramchund Roy, the gomashta of Bhuda,† &c. After that, in the year 1169, Dewan Soba Chund gave a tahood for the same jumma, and began to make the collections; but in the mean time a numerous body of ryots belonging to Cargehaut rose into rebellion, and seized upon the mofussil collections, report of which being sent to Monghyr, a message came from thence to the ryots, informing them that if they did not return to their duty forces should be sent against them.

† Probably Boda.

The son of Soba Chund was accordingly sent with some forces, and used every mode to encourage them to return to their duty but without effect, and the

troops were at last under the necessity of engaging and putting a great many to death; after which the aforesaid Dewan was confined and carried to Monghyr for having failed in his payments. Some time after this the Nabob Meer Cossim Khan fled from Monghyr, and the Company got possession of the country. Cossim Ulee Khan, who was formerly at Rungpore, returned in the year 1170 on the part of Meer Juffer, and having granted large deductions he made a settlement for Rs. 6,17,262-15-8-3 (*vide* Appendix F).

APPENDIX D.

Extract from a translation of the general Amilnama given to the Zemindar of Rungpore by Mr. Purling in September 1777, *as submitted to the Governor-General on the* 30*th of that month.*

Article 11.—You shall collect the malgoozary of the lands cultivated by the ryots, assul and abwab, in the mofussil, according to the rate of the pergunnah. You shall not exact any new heads of collections, and shall not demand mahatoot, maugun, &c.

Article 12.—You shall carefully settle all waste and deserted lands; and to all such ryots as are willing to rent these lands you shall give pottahs at the proper seasons, and collect their rents agreeably to them. If any ryots cultivate your lands without pottahs, you will demand from them only according to the rate of the pergunnah, nor are you permitted to force any of your ryots to pay the deficiencies of others, nor to take the lands of such as run away.

Article 13.—You are to collect from your ryots according to the last year and the year before, and according to the new pottahs you may grant. Should it be proved that you have collected more you will be made to return it, and be fined by Government; and if you repeat this oppression your zemindary will be forfeited and made khas.

Article 14.—Agreeably to the engagements you have entered into with Government, according to your harvests you will make your bundobust with the ryots in the mofussil, and collect your rents according to the harvests and not put them to the expense of interest by demands out of the proper season.

Article 15.—You are not to extract from your ryots any nuzzurs or salamies, nor sums on account of religious ceremonies, nor are you to give any.

Article 17.—Whatever money you advance to your ryots you will take a kistbundy for, after settling accounts in their presence, and collect them according to such kistbundy.

Article 22.—You shall give your ryots regular receipts for the payments they make at each kist. At the end of the year you shall settle accounts, and give them a rufanama or general discharge.

APPENDIX E.

Extracts from the kabooliyats of the Zemindars under the Collectorship of Rungpore for the Bengal year 1193.

I WILL exact no money from the ryots on account of duree, maugun, interest, batta, &c., but will collect the revenue and such other charges as have been allowed prior to and in the Bengal year 1191, independent of which I will make no other demand. I will not collect any moruncha (custom on marriage) layer chilunta (custom on grain, &c., carried overland), goliah maugun (custom on boats, &c.), which having been forbidden by the Company were expressly mentioned in the former settlements, and I will give the ryots dakhilahs for the money they pay to me. I will accept of no presents from them on account of nuzzurs or salary or tubwarry.*

* Probably festival presents.

APPENDIX F.

Extracts of a letter from MR. MCDOWALL *to the Board of Revenue*, 1787.

IN the Bengal year 1177 a hustabood of these districts was made by Mr. Grose, and the revenue was collected according to the mofussil settlements. Two subsequent hustaboods were also made in 1183 and 1191, but it does not appear that they took effect in the formation of the settlements.

The zemindars complain of the increase of 1191 and 1192, and acknowledge that taxes were imposed to enable them to pay it, but I am not acquainted with the particulars of them. An account of these taxes has been demanded from the zemindars, and shall be transmitted to you with as little delay as possible.

It is more than probable that the lands of Rungpore have never been measured since the country first came into the possession of the kings of Hindoostan; and the records of the district afford not the smallest information as to the quantity of land fit for cultivation, nor of the bazee zumeen in the possession of individuals. For this reason the zemindars complained loudly of the increase of 1192, alleging that it was not laid on proper grounds ascertained from an examination of the mofussil resources; and it was this circumstance which created so much difficulty to me at the time of making the present settlement, as represented in my cutcherry proceedings, accompanying my letters of the 11th June and 3rd July last. It were to be wished, therefore, that a particular examination were made of the actual resources of the district, and the ensuing settlement formed upon a firm and permanent basis, unsubjected to the complaints which the zemindars now make respecting the manner in which the increase of 1192 was levied upon them. This proposal I humbly beg leave to submit to your consideration. The examination once made will ever be of singular use in defeating the claims of zemindars for deductions. I have restored the canoongoes to the full possession of their functions in the mofussil; and in the event of a new hustabood being made I should cause them to keep regular mofussil accounts of the annual increase and decrease in each village throughout the district, thereby preserving a constant check over the zemindars, as well as ready means of affording redress in cases of oppression.

In the districts of Boda and Patgaon a ryot is permitted to cultivate as much ground as he chooses upon a large plain, for which he pays a fixed rent per annum, subject to no taxes whatever. If he happens to die or desert, his successor pays nothing more than the balance due from him, nor will he suffer the zemindar to measure the ground. If a measurement is attempted, the ground remains unoccupied.

APPENDIX G.

Zillah proceedings held by MR. PURLING, *under date the 3rd June* 1790.

TOOK into consideration the form of a pottah to be adopted in the country in every situation which would not set aside ancient custom or destroy the rights of the individual.

Several of the zemindars and their naibs being in attendance, they were informed of the orders of the Governor-General in Council concerning the establishment of a pottah, and that they were required to attend in order that such information might be obtained as to prevent any infringement of their rights or the customs of the country, and at the same time it was intended to render the accounts of the ryot with his zemindar perfectly easy and simple to be adjusted upon reference to the Collector.

The zemindars reply that they do not think the form of a pottah universally to take place will be at all approved by the ryots, who have in very few instances a fixed jumma, but they will give in a representation in writing on the subject.

They are now ordered by the Collector to prepare this memorial, and to bring a certain number of their most respectable ryots from their several pergunnahs.

Petition of the zemindars of Rungpore, delivered to MR. PURLING *on the 1st of Aghoon* 1197, *B.S.*

WE are directed by a publication issued from the hoozoor to fix the rents of assessment to be paid by the ryots, including both assul and abwabs, and to grant pottahs at the beginning of the year, specifying the quantity of land and the amount jumma to be paid by them.

The ryots of this country objected to engaging for any certain quantity of land and to the revenue being fixed, on account of its being contrary to the custom of the country, and the lands never having been measured according to ruckbabundy, they paying revenue only according to the quantity of land actually cultivated by them after deducting moojraee, or a certain part remitted to them as an engagement. The ryots of this country are not fixed residents, nor is the jumma permanent. Scarce any of them are possessed of valuable property or houses; and if the settlement be not made with them according to the established custom of the country, they desert, and the revenue is detrimental.

This country being of a sandy soil, and the crops consequently not being always good, the ryots cannot cultivate one piece of land more than two or three years together, after which they let it lie fallow, and cultivate the waste lands,* for which reasons the amount of the jumma and the quantity of land in cultivation are yearly fluctuating.

* This is gross misrepresentation

We have now laid before you all the particulars concerning our several zemindaries, and the ryots are forthcoming. If the bundobust be not concluded agreeably to the customs of the country, the collections will be endangered. You are the master of the country: be pleased to cause the bundobust to be concluded in such manner as to enable us to assess the jumma on the country and pay our revenues to Government.

Extract of a report to the Board of Revenue from MR. JOHN LUMSDEN, *under date the 17th January* 1792.

No general measurement having ever taken place, it will not, I conceive, without such previous step, be possible to furnish accounts of the lands so particular as is required. The same difficulties which are alleged to render a compliance with this regulation impossible to be carried into effect are also stated to occur in many parts of the district to the general plan of granting pottahs to the ryots, many of whom have absolutely refused to take them out.

Petition presented to MR. LUMSDEN *by the Zemindars, and submitted to the Board above.*

IT is required in the kabuliyats that we shall annually prepare accounts of the jumma, and insert it in all the particulars both of the revenue and of the rent-free lands There is no ruckbabundy measurement of the lands in this district, and we cannot therefore give any particular account of the lands. The different boundaries are ascertained from a knowledge of what we have always possessed. If the ancient custom was to be changed, and a ruckbabundy measurement was to be made, the revenue would suffer. On this account we cannot give in any specific accounts of our lands.

Letter from the Collector to JOHN RAWLINS, ESQ., *Secretary to the Board of Revenue, under date the 2nd July* 1793.

I HAVE received your letter of the 12th ultimo, together with the form for the report for the distribution of pottahs enclosed, and I now have the honor to transmit to you my report, by which you will observe that a very considerable progress has been made in this business since I last addressed the Board on the subject. I have received the form of pottah recommended by the Acting

President of the Board of Revenue, and had it been sent up sooner there would have been no objection to have adopted it in the pergunnahs of Idrakpore, Sooroopore, and Putlada, where the lands are of the kind mentioned in it; but as the form recommended by the late Collector to the zemindars is not much different, and as blank pottahs for the whole of the lands in the district have been prepared at a considerable cost, though in some places the ryots have not taken them, it would be hard to make any alteration now, as it would put the landholders to much additional expense and trouble.

In the pergunnah of Putlada the distribution of the pottahs, I understand, is not begun. I shall therefore recommend it to the zemindars to adopt what the Acting President laid before the Board.

APPENDIX H.

Letter from MR. A. WRIGHT, *Collector, to* J. WORDSWORTH, ESQ., *Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut of Zillah Rungpore, under date the* 14*th April* 1801.

I FIND it a duty incumbent upon me to submit a copy of a representation delivered in by the zemindars of this district, and request to be informed as to the extent and nature of the proclamation issued, prohibiting the ryots paying the charges of collection inserted in their pottahs.

If it be contended that the pottahs are not drawn out agreeably to the rules laid down by Section 54, Regulation VIII of 1798 A.D., I have to observe that only one form of an improved pottah has been in use since the formation of the decennial settlements, and which the landholders unanimously declare to have had the sanction of Mr. Lumsden, in whom the offices of Judge and Collector were then vested.

In the form of pottah promiscuously taken and submitted, you will observe the quantity of land specified, viz. 12 doors 13 kanees, the assul jumma of which is stated at Rs. 11-8-8-3, and the charges of collection, surunjamy, at annas 13-11-1, making in all Sicca Rs. 12-6.

If any revision of the form of the pottah should appear to you requisite, I beg leave to suggest the expediency of a limited period for the issue of such amendment, which would be so far productive of general benefit to the inhabitants as to prevent any misconstruction of the orders; at the same time that it will afford the whole body of the zemindars an opportunity of extricating themselves from the embarrassment which they at present labour under. The loss which the zemindars are likely to sustain by the issue of the present orders prohibiting the ryots paying khurcha inserted in the body of the pottahs may be at a moderate computation estimated at one lakh of rupees.

Letter from the same to the same, under date 5th May 1801.

I HAVE to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, and to repeat the information communicated in my letters of the 14th and 16th ultimo, viz. the unanimous declaration of the landholders that the form of pottahs, copy of which was submitted to you, had the approbation of Mr. Lumsden, who then officiated in the capacity of Judge and Collector of the district, and which form of pottah, it is presumable, was destroyed by fire among the records of the Office in 1797.

I have, pursuant to Section 7, Regulation IV, 1794, directed forms of pottahs to be drawn out, and shall, after signifying my approbation, transmit the same to be registered in the Adawlut.

Letter from MR. WORDSWORTH, *Judge of Rungpore, to* CHARLES BULLER, ESQ., *Secretary to the Board of Revenue, under date 7th May* 1801.

HAVING received a letter from the Collector of this zillah, under date the 14th ultimo, enclosing a petition presented to him by the zemindars, talookdars, and other description of landholders in this district, which attributes a considerable loss of revenue to a perwannah issued on the 10th of December last, by the late Acting Judge of Rungpore, and the zemindars having subsequently

presented to me another petition of a similar tendency, I have, after mature consideration, deemed it expedient, for the more speedy realization of the public revenue, and to do away all manner of pretext on the part of the said landholders for withholding the same, to recall the said perwannah of the late Acting Judge, and issue another in conformity to the wishes of the landholders, both of which I beg leave to submit, translations marked Nos. 1 and 2, for the information of the Board of Revenue.

Immediately upon the receipt of the Collector's letter and zemindars' petition (*vide* copy and translation Nos. 3 and 4), I addressed the letter (No. 5) to Mr. Montgomery, and from the accompanying copy of his letter (No. 6) it will appear that he was induced to issue the perwannah of the 20th December last in consequence of the summary complaints which had about that time been presented to him of unlimited mofussil khurcha being decreed by the moonsifs against the ryots in direct violation of Sections 54, 58, and 60 of Regulation VIII of 1793.

As it appears upon examination that no regular forms of pottah, made out in strict conformity to the above section, have ever been approved by the Collector and promulgated in the district, it may perhaps appear somewhat extraordinary that this circumstance should not have been formally noticed by me or my predecessors; but as no exception was ever made to the forms of pottah in any case brought before me for an arrear of revenue, I naturally concluded that the whole had been drawn out, approved, and promulgated, agreeably to the existing orders of Government. It is within the last few months only, and in consequence of additional imposition, that the irregularity of the pottahs in general use has been noticed, and the form transmitted by the Collector of the zillah with his letter of the 14th ultimo, and said to have been sanctioned by Mr. Lumsden, though by no means perfectly regular, appears to be the most unexceptionable in use in this district. But as none of them are perfectly consonant to the Regulations except in the mehals separated from Dinagepore and annexed to this district, and many exhibit a variety of clauses which give to the landlord a wide extended latitude for oppression and every species of undue exaction, I have deemed it my duty to take immediate notice of the same, and to call the Collector's attention to the sections contained in Regulation VIII, A.D. 1793, that a general revision of the whole of the pottahs throughout the district may be made, and new pottahs granted and promulgated as directed in Regulation VIII, 1793, being I humbly conceive, the only effectual means to secure to landlord and tenant respectively their just rights, and I trust my conduct on this occasion will be approved.

In the meantime the perwannah I have issued will preclude any excuse for the nonpayment of the revenue, should it, as the zemindar alleges, be withheld, in consequence of the one issued by Mr. Montgomery, but which, there are strong grounds for suspecting, is not absolutely the case, as it would appear that in several talooks the whole has been actually paid; and in other places, where regular pottahs are in use, the order for the nonpayment of khurcha could not possibly have produced any bad effect.

Extract of a letter from the Board of Revenue to the Collector of Rungpore, under date 19th May 1801.

THE Board direct me to observe that if the pottahs given in by the zemindars be drawn out in the form mentioned in their petition, that is, if the amount of the khurcha be specified and added to the amount of assul as follows—

	Rs.	A.
Assul	5	0
Khurcha	0	5
	5	5

they do not see the smallest objection to such a pottah, it appearing to them to be strictly conformable to both the spirit and the letter of the Regulations in regard to pottahs.

The Board observing that the Judge has expressed a wish that a general revision of the pottahs should be made by you throughout the district under your

charge, they direct me to observe that they are of opinion that, whether the pottahs be strictly proper or otherwise, at this late period you should not adopt a measure of so extensive an influence without a previous reference to the Board, who, in a case of this kind, would deem it their duty to represent the circumstance for the orders of the Governor-General in Council. You will accordingly communicate this opinion to the Judge.

REMARKS.—The Vice-President in Council remarks that the measures which have been recently adopted, with the view of obtaining accurate information on all those points which appear to be of primary importance to the protection of the peasantry from exactions, and to the permanent security of their legitimate rights and interests, preclude the necessity of any detailed remarks or orders on the subject so forcibly and so ably discussed by Mr. Sisson in his report on the relative state of the landholder and tenant in the district of Rungpore.

At the same time the Vice-President in Council remarks that when the arrangements now in progress shall have been so far advanced as to admit of the enactment of any specific provisions on the points above noticed, it will be desirable that Mr. Sisson's report should be again brought under consideration with a view to the eventual adoption of any of the suggestions offered by him which may appear calculated to be of practical utility.

W. B. BAILEY,
Secretary.

No. 32.

MR. MACLEOD'S REPORT ON CRIME, 1817.

Dated Rungpore, the 30th September 1817.

From—N. MACLEOD, ESQ., Magistrate of Rungpore,

To—The Acting Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces.

THE very great augmentation in the number of burglaries reported through the police exhibited by the two quarterly statements of crimes committed in this district between the 1st of January and the 30th June of the present year appearing to call for some explanation on my part, I take the liberty of offering a few observations on the subject of the causes to which so considerable an apparent increase in the extent of the prevalence of the crime of burglary in this zillah is in reality to be attributed.

2. A reluctance to appear in our courts of justice, or to undergo any visitation of our mofussil police officers, far outweighing the dread of such depredations as ordinarily attend the commission of the offences now falling within the legal definition of burglary is, I believe, admitted to prevail amongst the great body of the people throughout the whole province of Bengal. It is unnecessary here to enter upon any consideration of the causes which have conspired to create this disposition; but its immediate consequence is an earnest endeavour, and in effect a kind of tacit combination, on the part of every little community of village or hamlet to withhold from the officers of Government all information with respect to the commission of public crimes which is calculated to lead to a summons for the attendance of its members at the criminal courts, or a local investigation by the officers of the thanas. It has been the object of the legislature, and it is no doubt the peculiar duty of every Magistrate, to repress this prevailing disposition and prevent the bad effects to which it necessarily leads, as far as circumstances will admit. But as its influence in occasioning the concealment of public offences operates alike upon all who originally possess a knowledge of their occurrence; and as the scene in which it acts is usually, or always, removed from the immediate observation of the officers of police, whose first duty it is to counteract it, the difficulty to be encountered in attempting to give it an effectual check is almost insurmountable, and in point of fact I apprehend it must be admitted that in no district of Bengal does this cause fail

to produce the concealment of a considerable portion of the offences actually perpetrated.

3. A second obstacle, of no slight force, with which a Magistrate has to contend in his endeavours to obtain a particular knowledge of the occurrence of public crimes, is to be found in the misconduct of too many of those very persons whose duty it is by every possible exertion to bring them forward to light. A little more than ordinary supineness, on the part of an indolent or idle police darogah will soon inevitably relieve him of the trouble of receiving many informations of such offences as burglary and theft. And should any such informations on any unaccountable occasion still prove to be too numerous to be punctually forwarded to the Magistrate, without disclosing, as he may apprehend, too much of the real state of the jurisdiction under his charge, the most ready and simple expedient which suggests itself to him for saving, or even raising, his character with his immediate superior, without the sacrifice of his personal ease, is that of suppressing his informations and dismissing the informants, from whom he need rarely apprehend any sort of exertion to bring such transactions to light.

4. I could scarcely perhaps instance a district within the province wherein one or both of the causes of the concealment of public offences, now noticed, have produced their natural effects to a wider extent than they appear to have done a few years ago in the zillah of Rungpore.

5. Without referring further back than the year 1811, during which the enactments of the legislature were particularly directed to the suppression of the crime of burglary, and previously to which the number of offences of that description annually reported to the Magistrate was so small as scarcely to deserve any notice, I may here state that, as appears from the records of the office, the numbers of burglaries reported through the police officers in this district in the years 1811, 1812, and 1813, were in—

1811	...	...	93 burglaries.
1812	...	...	155 „
1813	...	...	176 „

6. The rigorous penalties denounced against the offence of burglary by Regulation I of 1811 having been promulgated at the very commencement of the first of these years, it is hardly to be supposed that the actual prevalence of the offence in question should have increased within that particular period in such proportion as the above statement would exhibit; and it can scarcely be doubted that the increase thus exhibited had existence merely in reference to the number of burglaries reported through the police, not in reference to that of those actually committed.

7. Adverting, however, to the very considerable extent and population of this district, which has been computed to comprise an area of 8,000 square miles, and to contain 2,750,000 souls, to the various circumstances of local influence which appear to operate in the encouragement of criminal offences within this jurisdiction, and to the public notoriety which existed at the time of the general prevalence of the offence under consideration, it could hardly be considered that even the increased number of 176 burglaries reported in 1813 was to be relied on as affording a satisfactory estimate of the number of such offences annually committed at that period within the district.

8. Accordingly Mr. Scott, who received charge of the Magistracy in 1814, having directed his particular attention to the important object of obtaining more accurate intelligence respecting the real state of the police, and availed himself of the assistance afforded to him by the promulgation of Regulation VIII of 1814, the number of burglaries, which became the subjects of official report throughout the year, increased during that gentleman's time in a proportion which, when compared to the reports of former years, appears almost incredible; and it is worthy of remark that Mr. Scott, having in 1815 issued a circular order directing that a burkundaz from each thana should be deputed to perambulate the jurisdiction to which he belonged in quest of information respecting the actual number of the burglaries which were committed, the number of those offences which were in consequence reported through the police within the first month of the adoption of this measure amounted to more than double the

number that had been reported in the preceding, or indeed in any former, month. The police reports exhibited—

In 1814	...	...	289 burglaries.
„ 1815	...	...	585 „
„ 1816	...	...	863 „

9. Yet, notwithstanding such an enormous increase obtained in the number of the reports of the offences alluded to, Mr. Scott's letter to your address of 10th October 1816 still refers to the "notorious fact that not one-third of the number of offences actually occurring had hitherto been reported to the police officers;" and the circumstance in explanation of which Mr. Scott adduces this observation, namely, "that the occurrence of burglaries and thefts was in a great measure confined to the very places at which the thanas were stationed," appears in itself to afford an unequivocal proof of the truth of the observation.

10. Had I been even inclined to question the accuracy of Mr. Scott's decided opinion upon this subject at the period at which I received charge of my present office, it was yet impossible I should for any length of time proceed in the discharge of my duty in the foujdaree court without finding the correctness of that opinion to a certain extent actually demonstrated, nothing being more common than for a confessing culprit to detail his share in the commission of a variety of thefts and burglaries of which no previous information whatever had been received, but of which the actual occurrence was in most cases on inquiry fully substantiated.

11. The want of punctual information of the occurrence of public offences being clearly the first and most serious of all obstacles to be encountered by the efforts of a Magistrate for the improvement of the state of the police, and the existence of such a deficiency, notwithstanding all that had already been done to remove it, being still most sensibly experienced in this district, it was no more than natural that I should follow up to their fullest extent the measures which had been adopted by my predecessor for the remedy of so serious an evil; and that I should even apply them with somewhat perhaps of greater vigour for the attainment of the important object he had held in view.

12. Accordingly, those provisions of the legislature which render the zemindars and their inferior local agents responsible for the communication of early intelligence of serious public offences were strictly enforced, and were specially applied in bringing to account putwarees, munduls, and other village zemindaree officers in whose respective villages burglaries and thefts had occurred without being punctually reported at the thanas, these classes of people appearing to possess the means of rendering the most efficient aid to the police which the state of the country is capable of affording.

13. It is to the effects of such measures, I am of opinion, that the number of burglaries officially reported (which has been increasing in so considerable a ratio for the last six years) has now risen to the great amount exhibited by the quarterly statements last transmitted from this Office.

14. It would of course be difficult to advance the positive assertion that the whole of the recent increase in question is to be thus explained; and it would be far more difficult to assert that even with this increase the reports of burglaries obtained through the police of this district do not still considerably fall short of the number of cases in which those offences actually occur.

15. I am fully aware of the deficiencies in point of honesty, ability, and activity in the characters of those classes of men who usually supply the situations of police daroghas, and on whom we must so much depend for a knowledge of the real extent of theprevalence of criminal offences; while it is almost impossible to procure men of superior character and attainments to fill situations wherein they are cheered and excited by no prospect of desirable advancement, and where any display of superior ability usually procures for them a removal to a similar office, of no additional emolument, but of much additional trouble and difficulty. And my own experience teaches me that in this district in particular the difficulty now noticed must very often occasion the necessity of conferring the charge of a thana jurisdiction upon a man entitled, either by his honesty or his ability, to scarcely any degree of public confidence.

16. But with respect to that increase in the number of a certain class of public offences, which it is now my object to explain, if it appears indisputable

that of a considerable portion of those offences in actual occurrence no information was hitherto obtained by the officers of the Government, it was clearly the first effectual step that could be taken towards their suppression to remove such a defect. And if the enlargement of the extent of our information has not altogether failed of its natural consequence in being followed up by an increase, in some degree proportionate, in the number of apprehensions, the police must in consequence have been put into greater activity, and the probability of an increase having taken place in the number of offences actually perpetrated is thus considerably diminished.

17. To enable you to form an accurate judgment upon this point as far as respects the half-year during which the district has been under my charge, I have the honor to submit (in enclosure No. 1) a statement of the number of burglaries and thefts reported through the police during the last six months, and of the number of offenders who have been apprehended.

18. From this statement you will perceive that the number of persons apprehended on charges of burglary and theft within the last six months, and who have been either sentenced to punishment, committed to the court of circuit, or required to give security for their good conduct (consequently who appear to have been seized on no groundless imputation), is 216. In this place I purposely state the number of apprehended offenders falling under the denominations of thieves and burglars collectively, because, as far as my experience goes, these classes of offenders appear to be in general, in this district at least, precisely the same description of people who are guilty of burglary one day and of simple theft the next, and who, in determining in the one case to proceed in their purpose by waiting for the advantage of unclosed door, or by the untying of a string, and in the other by cutting or breaking the string, or removing part of a miserable grass wall, are usually swayed by some adventitious circumstance of facility, scarcely less likely to be in favour of the latter than the former process.

19. From the statement which is herewith submitted in enclosure No. 2, you will perceive how great a number both of the burglaries and simple thefts comprised in the Statement No. 1 come under the denomination of the offence of cattle-stealing.

20. This particular species of theft, either attended with burglary or otherwise, appears to me to be far the most serious that prevails in this district, whether viewed in reference to the mischief which the offence itself in every individual instance occasions, or to the persevering and determined character of the offenders. The party in whose house any other description of theft or burglary has been committed usually finds himself subject to a loss of no more than a few pieces of coarse cloth, his bill-hook, or his weed-hook, and occasionally a brass pot, or some articles of a similar value, which, however useful and necessary for his convenience, can quickly at a small expense be again provided. But when a ryot is plundered of the cattle which draw his plough, he finds himself suddenly despoiled not only of the most valuable property he possesses, but at the same time of the indispensable means of his application of that industry upon which rests his sole dependence for the subsistence of himself and his family. With much difficulty, and too commonly by incurring a serious and harassing debt, he may after a time succeed in supplying the place of the property he has lost; but meanwhile the regular season for tillage has possibly passed away unemployed, and the time of harvest approaches, without bringing to him that produce which is absolutely essential to the satisfaction of his own wants and the demands of his landlord. I need hardly attempt to describe the wretchedness incident to such a case of misfortune or point to the possibility that its unhappy victim may be driven by the workings of despair to a recourse to the practice of that very system of depredation upon others which has already proved so fatal to himself.

21. Nor is the character of the offenders in these cases less flagrant and formidable than the offence itself is mischievous and desolating. Cattle-stealers in this quarter are usually no insulated individuals driven by occasional misery and distress to seek the means of life by the plunder of their neighbour, but are men of decided habits of depravity, who systematically follow theft as a profession, and who carry on their trade of plunder on a wide scale, and in regular and extended associations. The police very recently effected the apprehension of several members of an association of this description, which spread

the range of its depredations quite across a considerable portion of this zillah, from the district of Dinagepore into the territory of neez Behar.

22. The principal encouragement to the offence now under consideration appearing to be the facility acquired by the offenders in the disposal of their stolen property, and extreme difficulty being experienced, even in cases wherein the property was ultimately found, in tracing it satisfactorily to the actual thief, so as to render it the means of his conviction, (a difficulty greatly enhanced by the artful practice resorted to by many of these offenders of making their plunder pass through various hands, among the members of their own association, before it should be disposed of to an innocent person). Some measures seemed to be called for calculated to render the sale of stolen cattle a transaction of greater difficulty and hazard. With this view in April last some arrangements were made, directed, through the intervention of the headmen of the villages and the zemindaree superintendents of the hâts, to the object of restraining the indiscriminate sale of cattle either at the public fairs or in the villages, by persons who should be unable to give any satisfactory account of the means and manner by which they had come into their possession.

23. I hope that this measure has been attended with salutary effects. In the months of May and June, you will observe that the number of reported cases of cattle-stealing has somewhat decreased. In July and August it has diminished much more, the number of cases of this description reported during these months being, in July, 12 with burglary and 18 without burglary, and in August 12 with burglary and 10 without burglary.* And though the reports of the police do not usually appear to me to furnish very satisfactory data upon which to ground an opinion on such subjects, yet all the information which I have received through other channels leads me to believe that in this instance they exhibit no unfair estimate of the ratio in which the prevalence of the offence in question has actually decreased.

* In September have been reported eight cases attended with burglary and four cases without burglary.

24. The extent of these observations having already exceeded the limits which I had at their commencement proposed to assign to them, I am induced to make this an occasion of attempting a rather more full elucidation of my subject than I had originally contemplated, and to proceed now briefly to notice some of the causes which principally operate in extending the prevalence of the crimes of burglary and theft in this district. And I the more readily touch upon these considerations because the leading causes to which the extent of these crimes is chiefly to be ascribed appear to me to be such as operate in a similar manner in contributing to the prevalence of dacoity in this district, to which the attention of Government has so recently been attracted; those descriptions of persons who are occasionally led to the perpetration of this latter crime, with the exception of the principal ringleaders of gangs (and of those robbers who occasionally, though now rarely, appear in the northern parts of the district, known by the name of Keechucks), appearing to me to be precisely the same who on more ordinary occasions resort to the commission of burglary and theft.

25. I beg leave here to observe that as my inexperience with respect to the state of other districts of Bengal renders me incompetent to form any comparison between them and this zillah in regard to the actual prevalence of public offences within their respective limits, I do not propose to hold any such comparison in view in stating the causes which appear to me to contribute to extend the prevalence of public crimes in Rungpore. In consequence, without either admitting or denying that the extent of heinous offences is, in proportion to the extent and population of the jurisdiction, greater in this than in other districts, it will be my object to notice such causes as appear to me actually to operate in producing crime in this zillah, without reference to the existence of the same causes or the degree of their operation in producing similar effects in other parts of Bengal.

26. *First.*—The principal cause to which I am inclined to attribute the frequency of public offences throughout this zillah, and one which has formerly

been noticed by Mr. Sisson, is the dispersed manner in which the habitations of the people, formed of the most slender materials, are scattered over the whole face of the country. Villages in this district are comparatively speaking exceedingly rare; and the term mouzah here, instead of being accurately construed as a village, rather corresponds to what in European language we should denominate a parish. The house of a ryot with the huts of his two or three dependents, under the denominations of parjas or shikmi ryots, usually compose the whole of a hamlet, which is concealed from external view by bamboos and brushwood, and is surrounded on all sides by the land comprised within the limits of the ryot's cultivation.

27. It is manifest that such a dispersion of the dwellings of the inhabitants of the district is necessarily attended with inconveniences of the most serious nature in reference to the state of its police.

In the first place it renders the seclusion of a ryot of depraved and lawless habits, with dependents of his own choice and character, from the intimate society of his neighbours, a matter of no more than common occurrence, and thus affords to the private conduct and movements of himself and his agents all the secrecy which the evil nature of his plans and practices may require without necessarily exposing him, on account of the privacy of his mode of life, to any particular degree of suspicion. In consequence it must often happen that an individual of this description may continue for years in the practice of the most serious offences, without having afforded in the general tenor of his conduct, as viewed by his neighbours, any ground of suspicion or impeachment.

In the second place it tends in the highest degree to facilitate the concealment of the occurrence of public offences, the early observation of neighbours being so much excluded from one of the little clusters of huts above described as to be rarely likely to conclude where an offence, such as burglary for instance, has been committed, before the sufferer had an opportunity of arranging his measures for concealing it, with no other accessories than his own immediate dependents and connections, on whose silence he may very safely and surely rely.

In the third place it is manifest that the disposition of the dwellings of the inhabitants now referred to must hold out powerful temptations to plunder, both to the robber and the thief, by presenting in every direction a variety of insulated and solitary habitations, where the imaginable chances of resistance to a night attack, or the probabilities of seasonable alarm and timely pursuit attending the commission of a silent theft, are circumscribed within such narrow limits.

28. And here I beg leave particularly to attract your attention to the formidable obstacles which the local arrangement of the habitations in this district must inevitably oppose to the efficient operation of almost any system of village watch, such as has at any time been organized under the sanction of Government, to serve the purpose of a preventive police.

29. The extension of the chowkedaree system, framed under Regulation XIII of 1813, for the municipal police of the towns and cities, so as to embrace within the scope of its operation the whole population of a district, is a measure which I am informed has been resorted to in some neighbouring zillahs. Setting aside for the present the objection which would, I apprehend, arise to the adoption of this measure in this district from the poverty of the great body of the population, and supposing it to be found a practicable expedient, it cannot be doubted that here as elsewhere the introduction of such a measure would, in the first instance at least, be productive of the most powerful effects, in amelioration of the state of the police, by adding largely to the means of the discovery and apprehension of offenders, and by affording employment to a great portion of those who from want of any regular means of livelihood are now led into depraved and illicit courses. But it is clear that it would be utterly impracticable to render such a system adequate to the protection by watch of a population occupying dwellings dispersed, as they have been above described to be in this district, without multiplying its agents, and with them its expense, to such an extent as no public community could be capable of bearing.

30. These considerations have probably had their weight in deterring the several Magistrates who have of late years succeeded each other in the charge of this district from suggesting the adoption of any such arrangement as that now referred to in the zillah of Rungpore, and in inducing them to countenance and enforce, by more or less direct interference, the system of nightly watch by rotation, known here by the name of the golbundee, the plan of which is already known to you, and has been fully explained to Government by Mr. Sisson. I myself among others have been thus influenced, and under a strong sense of the inadequacy of the unaided efforts of the regular police to give any effectual check to the offences of burglary and theft, have endeavoured to ensure for them some substantial assistance from the exertions of the golbundee watch. At the same time I cannot deny that the strict enforcement of this system appears in some points of view to be liable to very forcible objections.

31. The institution has been said to have been originally organized to serve the purpose of a levy *en masse* for the protection of the country from the invasions and ravages of subjects of the foreign states lying on the northern frontier, to which it was frequently exposed while under the Mogul Government, in consequence of the yearly secession of the authorities and protective force of that Government to Moorshedabad from an apprehnesion of the bad effects of this climate during the rainy season. And it was first, I believe, enforced with a view to the benefit of the police by Mr. John Rees in 1809, and subsequently more perfectly modelled by Mr. Sisson.

32. There can be little doubt that a system ensuring the nightly and vigilant watch of a man from every house in the district, that is of at least one-eighth of the whole population, would go very far towards the suppression of heinous offences of every description. But it cannot be matter of surprise that the ryot who has toiled all the day should think it hard to be called on to relinquish the natural comfort of repose under his own domestic roof, and to take his tour of duty at the public watchhouse all the night. And I cannot deny that, as far as my observation goes, the great mass of the peasantry of the country (many of whom find themselves required to watch *every night*,) appear to regard the institution which calls upon them for such heavy sacrifices as a system productive of grievance, far overbalancing the danger to which their scanty portion of household property may be exposed from the prevalence of those offences which it is the object of that institution to suppress. As far as the expedient of giving rewards for the apprehension of offenders caught in the act, or with the property, can meet the obstacle which hence arises to oppose the efficiency of the system, there can be no doubt that the countenance of the institution must be productive of infinite advantage. But while every Magistrate must, I should think, deem such an attempt worth the trial, still, adverting to the extreme apathy and indolence on such subjects which mark the character of the inhabitants of this district, I am much inclined to doubt the great extent of the success of this expedient, unless the distributed rewards were made so considerable as to form objects of temptation, dangerous to the safety and character of innocent persons; and on reference to the circular orders upon the subject of the golbundee watch which are recorded in the fouzdaree office of this zillah, I do not find that any one Magistrate of late years has failed to discover the absolute necessity of most peremptory and constantly repeated interpositions of authority, through the police daroghas, the zemindars, and all the gradation of their dependent officers, in order to continue the operation of the system. In the necessity for this resort to incessant coercion through such a train of agents, called on to impel each other to the requisite activity, there arises a fertile source of evil, which the utmost efforts of the most active Magistrate can hardly be adequate to check. In the most favourable state of the system it must often happen that a ryot will for a night or two at least fail to repair to his appointed watch. He then feels himself a delinquent, placed at the mercy of the mundul and every other zemindaree officer of the village, and this mercy he will too frequently find it expedient to purchase. The mundul in whose village the golbundee watch has occasionally been (as it often will be) defective, is in a similar manner thrown upon the mercy of any of his superiors in the zemindaree establishment, or of any officer of police who chances to visit his hamlet. I need hardly suggest what a wide field is in this manner thrown open for oppression and corruption. To

anticipate and prevent such consequences, as far as circumstances will admit, is a most important and imperious duty on the part of every Magistrate, who in the present state of things is induced to keep the institution now referred to in force. I shall not fail to act under the strongest impression of the importance of this duty. But it has appeared to me in the highest degree proper that I should here state the extreme difficulties with which its due fulfilment has to contend, and the prospects of mischief which impose the absolute necessity, while they must often elude the possible efficacy of its constant and most vigilant observance.*

33. *Second.*—The extreme poverty of a large portion of the inhabitants appears to me to be a cause of the prevalence of public offences remarkably extensive in its operation in this district; and I have been more particularly led to refer to it in this light, from adverting to the very small value of the spoil which is usually carried off in cases of the occurrence of burglary or theft. The average amount of the loss of property sustained in each of 855 (out of the 1,014 cases of burglary and theft reported within the last six months) being no more than 1 rupee 4 annas. A thief, who steals at the simple instigation of rapacity might reasonably be expected to cast his views to some quarter which might hold out the prospect of a profitable spoil sufficient by its value to bear some proportion to the magnitude of the crime and consequent risk by which he is to obtain it. But he who steals from the pressure of immediate want must be often satisfied with the prospect of such a booty, quickly procured, which may barely supply him with the means of a few days' subsistence.

34. Of the circumstances which appear to contribute to multiply the number of instances of extreme poverty in this zillah, one which seems to me to be deserving of notice, although the actual extent of its operation cannot by any means be accurately estimated without the aid of far more satisfactory data than I can command, is—

The excess of the ratio in which the population of the district appears within the last thirty years to have increased, above that of the increase of the produce of cultivation within the same period.

I find from a letter of Mr. McDowall (formerly Collector of Rungpore), dated 28th August 1789, that the population of this district was at that time estimated by him to amount to 450,000 souls. Dr. Buchanan rates the population of this zillah in 1809 at 2,700,000. I know not upon what data Mr. McDowall's computation is founded, and consequently am unable to form a judgment of the degree of accuracy which is to be attributed to it, and which appears to be at least questionable; but supposing it to be considerably under-rated, the amount of the population at the time at which it was framed, and assuming that the actual number of inhabitants at that time in the district might even have been more correctly estimated at 700,000 than the amount he has stated, still a comparison of that calculation with the estimate formed by Dr. Buchanan will exhibit the result that within the periods of the formation of these two estimates the population of this district has increased in the ratio of 27 to 7; and as the increase is at this time unquestionably advancing in rapid progress, that population (in reference to the estimates above noticed) may be taken between the years 1789 and 1817 to have been fully quadrupled.

* *Note.*—The institution in this district termed the "zunjeerabundee zaminee" is distinct from the golbundee. It requires that every eight neighbours throughout the district be mutually security for each other's personal appearance whensoever or wheresoever it may be required. These eight persons may chance to be the same who are associated in one golbundee, or they may not. Though the institution does not profess to embrace any further direct object than security for every individual's personal appearance, yet a person of bad character is one always likely, sooner or later, to find the necessity of absconding, and the becoming such a person's security is in consequence attended with its proportionate share of risk. Independently also of this consideration, the zunjeerabundee zaminee is generally regarded as to a certain degree involving the character of the surety in the conduct of the individual for whose appearance he is responsible. Thus it is difficult for a person of bad character to obtain his place in the zunjeerabundee, and when he altogether fails to do so this circumstance marks him as an object of caution and suspicion to his neighbours. The advantages attendant on this system appear to be fully appreciated by all ranks of the people, and I think they are of great importance. I have therefore exerted myself to keep up the system in full operation; and as a measure subsidiary to it, I have recently required statements to be made of the number of families now comprised within each village throughout the district, at the same time issuing instructions prohibiting the landholders and farmers of every description from hereafter allowing any stranger to settle within their respective estates without giving information of it to the neighbouring thanadar, with a communication of whatever they may themselves have learnt of the new settler's previous character, and of the cause and manner of his quitting his former residence.

On obtaining a rough estimate of the annual produce yielded by some of the principal estates lying in different parts of the district at the present day,* and comparing it with the assets which those estates were estimated annually to yield about the time of the formation of the decennial settlement, I do not find that the produce of the lands comprised in this district, viewed in the average, appears to have during the intermediate period been much, if at all, more than doubled.

The increase in the population of this zillah would thus appear to be double of that which has taken place in the produce of its cultivation within nearly the same period. But even supposing the preponderance of the former above the latter to be in a ratio considerably less than the above statements exhibit, still it must appear to be sufficient to have created a very considerable pressure of the extent of the population upon the limits of the means of subsistence; and this pressure, in a country where the strongest stimulus, nothing in fact short of absolute want, is requisite to urge a cultivator to move one mile from his native village in quest of new or more ample means of industry and subsistence, must have operated very severely in straitening the circumstances of the lower orders in the most populous parts of the district, and greatly multiplied instances of individual poverty.

NOTE.—*The following comparative statement exhibits the increase which appears to have taken place in the gross produce of the several estates named in it between the period of the formation of the decennial settlement and the present time.*

NAME OF ESTATE.	Jumma assessed at the decennial settlement.	Estimated profits remaining to the zemindar at the time of the decennial settlement.	Total estimated produce of the estate at the time of the decennial settlement.	Estimated produce of the estate in 1816-17.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Baharbund	80,700	32,000	1,12,700	2,25,000
Patladah	22,000	10,000	32,000	1,07,000
Suroppore	60,000	20,000	80,000	1,25,000
Kukauseyah ...	44,000	10,000	54,000	1,37,000
Munthunna... ...	22,500	10,000	32,000	65,000
Koonree	43,941	26,058	70,000	1,28,000
Futtehpore	36,021	13,979	50,000	80,000
Total ...	3,09,162	1,22,037	4,30,700	8,67,000

I cannot take upon me to say that the rough estimates here given are perfectly accurate, but they are probably sufficiently so for my present purpose.

2nd.—Another cause contributing to extend the pressure of poverty in this zillah may, I think, be found in the almost universal prevalence among the inhabitants of many populous parts of the district of a habitual consumption of opium, a practice originally adopted, and even now perhaps generally indulged, with the mere view of protecting the constitution from the bad effects of the dampness of the climate. This practice is not only, when regarded in the most extended view, to a certain degree injurious to the fortunes of the whole of the lower orders, by adding to their necessary wants, but is one which, from the very exhilarating and grateful nature of its temporary effects, must necessarily be expected, in an immense number of individual instances, to degenerate in absolute excess. In no instance can excess in the indulgence of such a habit fail to draw after it a train of most ruinous and degrading consequences. It is alike injurious to the physical and moral powers of man; and in whatever station in life it may find its victim, it almost certainly entails upon him a degradation of character and derangement of all regular plans and means of life. But when its influence has fallen upon a man of the common or lower orders in society, as it at once incapacitates and disinclines him for the pursuits of honest industry, it cannot fail quickly to subdue him to the miseries of poverty, with a mind ill prepared to restrain him from seeking an alteration of those miseries by the ready and tempting expedient of preying upon the fruits of his neighbour's toil.

3rd.—The great proportion which Mussulmans compose of the aggregate amount of the population of the district may be cited as a circumstance calculated to augment the lists, both of cases of penury and of instances of vice and depravity. I need not here explain the points in the Mussulman character, as compared with that of the Hindoo, in reference to which this statement is

thus adduced. It is well known that, as compared with their Hindoo neighbours, the Mussulmans are proverbially imprudent and extravagant; and it is, I believe, generally admitted that they are at the same time far more addicted to profligacy and vice.

35. *Third.*—The contiguity of parts of Morung and Bhootan, and of the territory of neez Behar, is a circumstance tending to encourage the prevalence of public crimes in certain portions of this district, which has already been most fully brought before the notice of Government by Mr. Sisson, who has described the peculiarities of the irregular frontiers, dividing those states from the Company's territory in this district so as to leave no room for the necessity of any further elucidation of the ready means of escaping detection, and consequent encouragement to depredation, which they must necessarily hold out to public offenders of every description, whether our own subjects or inhabitants of the adjacent territories beyond the reach of our authority. With regard to neez Behar in particular, there can be no doubt that its local situation in relation to this district must ever, while it continues the scene of anarchy and misrule exhibited under its present system of government, prove an insurmountable obstacle to the effectual improvement of the police in those thanas of Rungpore which lie adjacent to its boundary. If additional notices were requisite to establish this point I might state that while filling the office of Commissioner in Cooch Behar I held for a time the seals of the judicial courts of the Rajah of that territory. There was scarcely one of the several gangs of dacoits which were apprehended and brought before me for examination which did not clearly appear to have its established connections within the borders of this district, in concert with whom its depredations were carried on indiscriminately in Rungpore and Cooch Behar.

36. These appear to me to be the primary causes of the prevalence of public crimes operating extensively in this district. Others, I am aware, have also been cited to account for the same effects, and these have been attributed by Mr. Halhed in his letter of the 30th June 1816—

1st.—To the enormous oppressions and exactions, attended with personal violence, practised by the landholders over their tenants, and reducing them to such severe straits as to drive them to the commission of crimes for the means of making good the rent demanded of them.

2nd.—To the number and various descriptions of vagrants who infest the district under the general denomination of bazeegurs.

37. With respect to the latter of those topics I must confess that if the description of vagrants referred to do now generally infest this zillah in the manner thus described, the officers of its police have failed in their duty in a degree even far beyond what my suspicions can attribute to them; for since I have held charge of my present office not one individual falling under any of the denominations of bazeegurs enumerated by Mr. Halhed has been brought before me under the charge or suspicion of a public offence; and yet the peculiarities of their mode of life, which separate them from the bulk of the community, appear to render them very likely objects for suspicion to light on. I should be far more disposed to look to the number of itinerant Mussulman fukeers, who wander about the district under the cloak of a devotee's profession, for an account of many of the most heinous offences which are committed. A band of dacoits is rarely apprehended in which one at least of this description of vagrants does not appear to have acted an enterprising part.

38. With regard to the other cause of the prevalence of public offences above referred to—the subject of the relative condition of the ryots and the landholders of this district, is a very comprehensive one; and many considerations present themselves to be weighed in determining the accuracy of a conclusion which would exhibit this zillah to be pre-eminent among the districts of Bengal in displaying the picture of misery and crime springing from the triumph of power and rapacity over unoffending weakness.

39. That here, as in every part of every Asiatic country, the powerful will seek to oppress the weak; that here as elsewhere the characteristic timidity and indolence of a peasant of Bengal, conspiring with every unfavourable circumstance of his condition to lead him to submit to wrong without seeking redress, often serves to invite the ready hand of rapacity to its prey, and to stimulate it to new

and repeated aggression, are positions which will not readily admit of a doubt. But the point is, are lawless oppression, violence, and exaction on the part of the landholders in this district towards the peasantry practised to such surpassing extent or excess as, from the extraordinary intensity of their pressure upon the condition of the lower orders, to be deemed peculiarly characteristic of the internal state of the zillah of Rungpore, and to form a special primary cause of the prevalence of public crimes within its limits? A mere reference to the character of the peasantry of most parts of this district, who have on several occasions evinced a very turbulent disposition, and who appear generally to possess a far less than ordinary degree of that spirit of abject and silent submission which is found so predominantly to prevail throughout the province of Bengal, would alone be sufficient to urge me to question the correctness of such a position.

40. That illegal cesses and demands upon the ryots, coming under the denominations of kurcha of various descriptions, are very generally exacted throughout this district, is not to be denied. But this is only a partial, however prominent, feature of the subject. To form with any prospect of accuracy and certainty full estimate of the actual state of the relations subsisting in this district between the landlord and tenant, and the mode and extent of the influence of those relations upon the condition of the latter, a variety of topics must be admitted for discussion, involving many points which can only be ascertained by very careful and minute investigation. And for my own part I consider those to be so numerous and various, that I am unwilling to give any decided opinion on the subject without having had the opportunity I have hitherto been unable to take of ascertaining by personal observation the actual state of things in different parts of the mofussil.

41. My present impression, however, is that the most severe pressure at this time felt by the ryots of this district is that which proceeds from the use or abuse to which the landholders, especially the farmers, apply their right of measurement, a right which the indefinite extent of the jotes occupied by the ryots in almost every part of the district renders peculiarly obnoxious to them, but to the exercise of which, on the part of the zemindars and farmers, the promulgation of Regulation V of 1812 must, I think, be admitted to have of late years given an uncommon and, as affecting the ryots, a most baneful activity.

42. The extremely defective mode in which the decennial settlement was formed in this district defined and ascertained no one point except the specific jumma of revenue which each estate was to yield to Government. With respect to relative rights subsisting between the landholder and cultivator, all was left utterly vague and indefinite; and the enactments of the legislature, which prescribed the consolidation of all the demands of the landholder upon the cultivator into one specific assul jumma, appear to have been altogether neglected.

43. The introduction of the system of the perpetual settlement had on the one hand communicated to the cultivator the right of emancipation from all demands in the shape of abwab or kurcha; on the other hand, it had left to the landholder the right of ascertaining by measurement the actual extent of each ryot's cultivation, and assessing it accordingly, under a conformity with the established pergunnah rates.

44. In this district it so happened that the endeavours of the landholders to under-rate the extent of their several estates, with the view of obtaining more easy terms in the adjustment of their settlement with the Government, had been remarkably successful. But while the aggregate calculation of the extent of the lands comprised within each landholder's estate was thus under-rated, the same was the case with regard to the calculated extent of each ryot's cultivation, as it stood in the village register; and almost every ryot in the district held the cultivation of a much greater extent of land than that upon which his nominal rent was levied.

45. The apprehension, however, of exposing themselves to an enhancement of the demands of the State upon their respective zemindarees by a measurement of the lands held by their tenants (which in publishing the actual extent of each component part of their several estates, would have also disclosed the aggregate extent of the estates themselves,) for a considerable period restrained the

landholders from availing themselves of the right of measurement; and they were at the same time willing, by any temporary sacrifice, to secure the continuance of the system of collecting those various dues and cesses falling under the various denominations of kurcha, bheekun, maugun, &c., &c., which the legislature had prescribed.

46. The ryots, on the other hand, regarded no sacrifice short of absolute and immediate ruin to be so formidable and calamitous as that of submitting their respective jotes to the scrutiny of a measurement; while they either remained for a time in partial ignorance of the scope of the loss, requiring the abolition of all demands advanced in the shape of abwab or kurcha, of whatever denomination, or did not immediately appreciate, as the legislature had contemplated, the value of their emancipation from those demands.

47. Hence arose a kind of tacit compromise of their respective rights between the landholder and tenant, the former refraining for the present from the exercise of his right of measuring the extent of the latter's tillage, and the latter continuing still to pay his quota of the various dues which the law had authorized him to withhold.

48. I need hardly say that this state of things left open a wide field for contention between the landholder and the ryot, to be occupied on the first occasion of extraordinary stimulus either to the one party or the other.

49. Such occasions in cases of individual interest must frequently have occurred, and must always have been injurious to both parties, and usually utterly ruinous to the ryot, who was the weaker. But such an occasion of general influence and extent throughout nearly the whole district presented itself in the promulgation of Regulation V of 1812, and the misconstructions to which it was liable; and the consequences have for these few years past been pressing with a daily accumulating weight upon the condition of the peasantry.

50. Briefly to exemplify some of these consequences. A landholder or farmer adverting to the right of forming new engagements with his ryots, conveyed to him, as he apprehends, by the regulation above quoted, notices the great extent of a certain ryot's tillage, and demands of him an enhanced rent. The ryot resists, and probably menaces the assertion of his right to exoneration from the landholder's constant demands of abwab and kurcha. The landholder or the farmer, however, proceeds to prepare, or at least threaten, to subject the ryot's jote to a regular measurement. If the ryot prove sturdy in his defiance, the threat is followed by the deed; the measurement affords grounds for an enhancement probably very far exceeding that which the ryot had previously rejected; and his failure in the satisfaction of this new demand, backed as it is by the authority of a measurement, is quickly followed by a legal or illegal ejectment, that is by immediate and decisive ruin. But in very many cases the ryot, in alarm at the bare mention of the word "jeereeb," is in the first instance induced, sometimes by the aid of fair, sometimes of unfair means, to sign an agreement for the payment of an enhanced rent. His land is thus rescued from the dreaded measurement. No more for the present is said of his resistance to the demands of "maugun taugun," and he remains in his jote, though upon worse terms than formerly.

51. Now the question occurs, whether in such a case as that last suggested (to say nothing of those cases, few as they are, wherein no enhancement of rent has taken place), the ryot, in thus acceding to the illegal imposts (the maugun taugun) of the landlord, subjects himself to so hard a lot, that is to the payment of so heavy a sum as would fall to his share, were the land which he cultivated assessed according to its measured extent, and all demands upon him for abwab and kurcha at once and *bonâ fide* abolished, the fact being fairly considered that, generally speaking, every ryot in the district cultivates a portion of land very greatly exceeding in many instances—I believe more than double—the quantity for which he stands rated in the village register.

52. I can entertain no doubt of the general answer which should be made to this question; but to give an accurate and detailed solution of it would be extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, without a careful use of the

means afforded by such opportunities of personal observation in various parts of the interior of the district as I have not yet been able to command. And at all events the extent of my remarks upon this subject will appear to have already, I apprehend, too greatly assisted to lengthen this address far beyond its due limits.

ABSTRACT OF TABLES.

Statement of burglaries and thefts reported, and of persons apprehended on charges of burglary or theft, in zillah Rungpore between the 1st January and 30th June 1817.

	Cases reported.	Number of cases in which cattle was stolen.	Number of cases in which arrests were made.	Number of persons arrested.	Number convicted, committed, or from whom security for good behaviour was demanded.
Burglary ...	595	275	58	160	92
Theft ...	363	152	110	177	124
Total ...	958	427	168	337	216

W. H. D'C.—Regr. No. 281—500—17-4-76.